



Your Global Inspection Solution



SEAFOOD INSPECTION PROGRAM

Seafood Inspection Program
NOAA Fisheries
U.S. Department of Commerce
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Seafood Inspection Services of the U.S. Department of Commerce - NOAA Fisheries

Inspection, Grading and
Certification Services

Third Party Verification Audits

Training and Education

NOAA Fisheries

SEAFOOD INSPECTION PROGRAM

Our Mission:

To ensure the safety and quality, as well as enhance the marketability and sustainability, of seafood products for the benefit of the American consumer by providing science based inspection services to the seafood industry.

Our Vision:

“An informed society that has confidence in the seafood that they purchase, sell and consume today and in the future.”

Table of Contents

PROTECTION THROUGH INSPECTION	3
Inspectors Serve Five Roles.....	4
Benefits	5
PROCESS INSPECTION SERVICES	6
Resident Inspection Program	6
Quality Assurance Program	6
HACCP Quality Management Program (QMP)	7
International Third Party Verification	8
PRODUCT INSPECTION SERVICES	8
Grading	8
Official Marks.....	9
Certification	10
Buyer/Seller Specifications	10
<i>Domestic Products</i>	10
<i>Imported Products</i>	11
Export Certification	11
Lot Inspection.....	12
CONSULTATIVE, TRAINING AND LABORATORY SERVICES	12
HACCP, Sanitation and Quality Plan Development.....	12
Analytical Laboratory Services.....	13
Training and Education Services	13
<i>HACCP Training</i>	13
<i>Specialty Courses</i>	15
<i>Seafood Splash Course for Supermarkets and</i>	
<i>Restaurants</i>	15
Contact Information	16

PROTECTION THROUGH INSPECTION

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) oversees fisheries management in the United States. Under authority in the 1946 Agricultural Marketing Act, the NOAA Seafood Inspection Program provides inspection services for fish, shellfish, and fishery products to the industry. The NOAA Seafood Inspection Program is often referred to as the U.S. Department of Commerce (USDC) Seafood Inspection Program and uses marks and documents bearing the USDC moniker.

The NOAA Seafood Inspection Program offers a variety of services which assure compliance with all applicable food regulations. The Program offers sanitation inspection as well as system and process auditing in facilities, on vessels, or other processing establishments in order to be designated as official establishments. Product quality evaluation, grading and certification services are available on a product lot basis. Certain products may be eligible to bear official marks, such as the U.S. Grade A, Processed Under Federal Inspection (PUFI) and Lot Inspection.

The services provided by NOAA include the following:

- Establishment Sanitation Inspection
- System and Process Audits
- Product Inspection and Grading
- Product Lot Inspection
- Laboratory Analyses
- Training
- Consultation
- Export Certification

These services can be provided nationwide, in U.S. territories, and in foreign countries. All types of establishments such as vessels, processing plants, and retail facilities may receive these services. All edible product forms ranging from whole fish to formulated products, as well as fish meal products used for animal foods, are eligible for inspection and certification.

The program is a competent authority within the U.S. Government for issuance of health certificates for export of fish and fishery products to foreign countries. The official government forms and certificates issued by USDC inspectors are legal documents recognized in any U.S. court.

Inspectors Serve Five Roles

Services provided by the NOAA Seafood Inspection Program Consumer Safety Officers and Inspectors are tailored to the needs of the participant. Inspection personnel generally serve in the following roles as they perform their duties:

Sanitation advisor – cites and oversees sanitary and hygienic practices in the facility and with food handlers

Quality control monitor – monitors the condition and production of raw materials to final product to assure a safe, wholesome and quality end product

Observer – observes the overall operations of the facility and personnel practices

Communicator – maintains open communication with plant management to resolve problems and support production of premium products

Official certifier – samples and evaluates final product and certifies results

Benefits

NOAA Seafood Inspection Program participants can realize many advantages which can:

Increase consumer confidence

Enhance product marketability

Satisfy military and other Federal, State, institutional, and retail buyers

Develop and improve quality systems

Obtain certificates which are accepted in court as evidence of fact

Offer opportunities to market U.S. Grade A products

Develop processing specifications for non-standardized seafood products

Assure you, the buyer, of accurately marked product (net weight, species, etc.)

PROCESS INSPECTION SERVICES

Resident Inspection Program

This program combines traditional, continuous on-site inspection which ensures adherence by the facility to the sanitary and process requirements of Good Manufacturing Practices with finished product inspections for quality. Participants under this program must also meet FDA Seafood HACCP Regulatory Requirements.

Seafood Inspection personnel will provide continuous inspection services during all hours of operation during which certified products are produced. Coverage can be provided for a certain number of production hours per week, or multiple shifts per day. Contracts typically range anywhere from 4 to 120 hours per week (for companies operating three shifts per day.)

Program participants meeting the regulatory requirements and program requirements of the USDC Seafood Inspection Program can utilize either the nationally recognized Grade A or PUFIs shield on their seafood products. Products produced under this system qualify for certificates.

Integrated Quality Assurance Program

This program was a precursor to the HACCP-based Inspection Program and offered a reduced inspection

frequency service for companies with a validated Quality Assurance Program.

This program is designed for seafood processors located in the U.S. which have a well designed Quality Assurance Program and qualified staff overseeing their system.

Program participants must be in compliance with all federal requirements including the FDA Seafood HACCP

Regulation and have process controls in place to ensure the quality parameters are met. In addition, a Quality Assurance Program that reflects in process Sanitation controls and lot-by-lot end product quality verification program must be submitted and approved by the USDC Seafood Inspection Program. Firms are evaluated not less than weekly.

HACCP Quality Management Program (QMP)

This is a newer HACCP-based program that better integrates preventive control strategies to ensure seafood is safe, complies with all food regulations, and meets predetermined quality standards is now offered.

The HACCP QMP program combines the elements of internationally recognized quality standards with a HACCP-based program designed to control safety issues. Under this program, companies will take the next step toward more fully integrating safety and quality controls under one comprehensive plan.

In keeping with the growing international movement toward improving the consistency of quality standards, the Seafood Inspection Program has further integrated quality into its HACCP-based inspection system. The frequency of evaluation is based on compliance with program criteria. Firms may be evaluated monthly or quarterly.

Understanding and meeting your customer quality specifications is essential. By adopting this program, firms will benefit by increasing their documented control over quality from their supplier to their customer's door.

International Third Party Verification

The Seafood Inspection Program offers Third Party Verification Services internationally and in the U.S. The audit scope can be limited to product evaluations or expanded to ensure your company's suppliers fully meet FDA Seafood HACCP and other regulatory requirements and your company's specifications. Audit standards may include the regulatory requirements of the competent authority, international standards or buyer specifications.

PRODUCT INSPECTION SERVICES

Grading

Domestic companies meeting regulatory requirements, maintaining high level sanitation standards and meeting specific quality criteria can utilize the official marks of inspection such as the nationally recognized Grade A or PUFIs shield on their products.

Official Marks

Products inspected and certified under the USDC Seafood Inspection Program which meet all specified requirements and criteria can bear one or more of the following official marks or statements associated with the program.

U.S. Grade A



The U.S. Grade A mark signifies that a product meets the highest level of quality established by the applicable U.S. grade standard and has been processed under the USDC Seafood Inspection Program in a sanitarily approved facility.

Processed Under Federal Inspection (PUFI)



The PUFI mark or statement signifies that the product is certified to be safe, wholesome and properly labeled, conforms to quality and other criteria in the approved specification, and has been officially inspected in a participating establishment under Federal inspection.

Lot Inspection Mark



The USDC Lot Inspected mark identifies products that were officially sampled and inspected to conform to an approved specification or criteria. This mark may be used on retail packages and packaging provided the label and specification are approved.

Retail Mark



Participants qualify to utilize the Retail Mark by contracting for sanitation services and associated product evaluation. Use of the retail mark gives retail firms the opportunity to advertise on banners, logos, and/or menus that their facility is

recognized by the USDC for proper sanitation and handling of fishery products.

HACCP Mark



The HACCP mark may be used alone or in conjunction with existing grade marks to distinguish that the product was produced under the HACCP Quality Management Program. Participants receive the marketing benefits of using the HACCP mark on brochures, banners, and company labels.

Certification

Buyer/Seller Specifications

Domestic Products

The USDC Seafood Inspection Program can assist processors, suppliers, buyers and retailers in the development of process and finished product specifications, customized to individual needs or operations.

We can inspect product on a lot-by-lot basis for compliance to customized buyer/seller specifications and offer the USDC Lot Inspection mark, as well as provide certification for such product.

Imported Products

Before you commit to your customer, we can help you write your product specifications. Additionally, in the country of origin, we can train plant personnel in sanitation practices, hazard analysis and other procedures, and assist the plant in writing and implementing a HACCP plan. We can also verify that all U.S. Federal HACCP seafood requirements are met through performance of third party verification audits.

Once the product arrives in the U.S., we can inspect the product and offer the USDC Lot Inspection mark as well as certify that the product meets your customer's quality requirements, and provide lot-by-lot certification

Export Certification

The NOAA Seafood Inspection Program offers export certification to facilitate trade of seafood products that meet the unique requirements of each importing country, and any other specific buyer criteria.

NOAA works to ensure trade of products on behalf of its clients. NOAA issues health certificates to U.S. exporters and negotiates on behalf of U.S. firms as countries develop new or modify existing health certificates. It communicates with foreign officials during the review and acceptance by the competent authority of the importing country

Lot Inspection

The Seafood Inspection Program performs quality inspections of specified lots of seafood products.

Any company interested in having a lot of product inspected is eligible for this service. Companies can request inspections for any lot of imported or domestically produced products.

Inspection personnel will conduct finished product inspections as specified by the customer. For companies wishing to limit the lot inspection to verification of buyer/seller specifications, inspections will be performed and paperwork indicating results will accompany the product.

CONSULTATIVE, TRAINING AND LABORATORY SERVICES

HACCP, Sanitation and Quality Plan Development

The Seafood Inspection Program can assist you in the development, implementation, or verification of your HACCP program to accommodate not only mandatory seafood safety requirements, but also seafood quality characteristics (Quality Management System). This on-site service walks your HACCP team through the necessary steps to develop a plan specific to the products and processes, to facilitate the implementation of the plan, or to verify an existing operational plan.

Verification requires that at least one person be properly trained, as determined by passage of our test at the end of our HACCP training, or on site service, to monitor the HACCP plan at your facility. At the end of this visit, your facility will be operating under a working HACCP plan, which may include different commodities and be verified, in an official statement from the U.S. Department of Commerce, as a facility that meets the mandatory requirements for seafood safety established by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

Analytical Laboratory Services

The Seafood Inspection Program can provide surveillance sampling and analytical testing which is performed to verify the effectiveness of existing process control measures and assure that inspected seafood is safe, wholesome, and properly labeled. In the event that routine oversight reveals a deficiency in sanitation, process controls and/or product, additional laboratory testing may be warranted.

Training and Education Services

The USDC Seafood Inspection Program offers training for people involved in every aspect of the seafood industry. We offer training from HACCP to sensory analysis; from sanitation to the development of product specifications.

HACCP Training

The HACCP Workshop for industry, retail or foodservice personnel is an intensive three-day course that covers all aspects of the HACCP concept as it relates to seafood

harvesting, processing, transporting, distributing and retailing. For over 12 years we have successfully trained thousands of industry professionals. Students are taught the following:

- Introduction to the HACCP concept and FDA regulation
- Hazard Analysis: Prerequisite Programs and Preliminary Steps & Identifying Risk Factors
- Hazard Analysis: Theory and Application
- Critical Control Point Determination
- Developing a HACCP Plan
- Critical Limits
- Monitoring Procedures
- Corrective Actions
- Verification Procedures
- Record Keeping Procedures
- Sanitation Control Procedures

The HACCP workshop is available at regularly scheduled times or on a custom basis to satisfy special needs such as traveling to a specific location, serving the schedule of an individual firm or providing assistance in developing a HACCP plan. We can accommodate groups of up to twenty people. Workshops are available nationally or internationally in English, Spanish and French.

Completion of this workshop fulfills training requirements as outlined in Part 123.10 of the FDA Seafood HACCP regulation and for NMFS Part 1, Chapter 9, Section 2, for participants in the voluntary USDC HACCP Quality Management Program.

Specialty Courses

Seafood Splash Course for Supermarkets and Restaurants

This is a 3-day workshop specially designed for supermarket professionals, chefs and foodservice personnel providing basic information on aquacultured products, wild harvested seafood, quality, sanitation, safety, marketing, and much more!

- Seafood Quality Evaluation
- Seafood Cooking Techniques
- Merchandising and Sales
- Menu Merchandising
- Discover aquaculture, tour processing plants and the historic New England Auction System
- Minimize Shrink

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