

# **NEFSC FSB Trip Trainer Certification Standards**

Northeast Fisheries Science Center Fisheries Sampling Branch

## Summary

All FSB observer trainees, upon completion of an initial Observer Training Course, must deploy on a set number of certification training trips before becoming fully certified observers (see [Observer Training and Certification](#) document). At least one of these trips, typically the first, must be taken with a certified trip trainer. The purpose of the trip trainer is to evaluate the trainee's performance and aptitude with regard to FSB observing and sampling protocols. Each trip trainer must be certified by an FSB staff member before taking observer trainees on trips. The trainer candidate must be proficient in FSB data collection protocols, and capable of successfully instructing and evaluating observer trainees on their certification trips. The trainer must meet minimum levels of field work and data quality standards to maintain their trip trainer certification.

## Definition of Terms

- COTR: Contracting Officer Technical Representative; the FSB staff member responsible for overseeing the program contract; here it also refers to the Industry Funded Scallop (IFS) program liaison.
- Observer Trainee: a person having recently completed an observer training course, but who is not yet certified in that observer program; here, the “trainee”.
- Trip Trainer: a certified, experience observer who accompanies a new observer trainee one or more of their certification training trips; here, the “trainer”.
- Certification Training Trip: one or more trips that observer trainees are required to take in order to complete observer certification. See the [Observer Training and Certification](#) document.
- Trip Trainer Certification: the process by which a trip trainer candidate becomes a certified trip trainer.
- Trip Trainer Candidate: an experienced observer who is being considered for trip trainer certification, which includes a trip trainer certification trip; here, the “candidate”.
- Trip Trainer Certification Trip: a trip in which a trip trainer candidate performs the duties of a certified trip trainer, and an FSB staff member performs the duties of an observer trainee.

## Trip Trainer Role Expectations

The trip trainer’s primary duties are to evaluate how well an observer trainee would perform on their own deployments, and identify potential issues for FSB data editors and data quality staff. This includes:

- Coordinating with the trainee before the trip,
- Reviewing and evaluating:
  - Species identification,
  - Sampling methods, and
  - Documentation,
- Facilitating communication between the observer and the captain and crew,
- Providing suggestions for improvement during the certification training trip, and
- Completing and submitting an evaluation form (see [Certification Training Trip Evaluation](#))

The evaluation form can serve as a model for items to be reviewed, demonstrated, and/or discussed during the trip. All items applicable to that program should be reviewed, even if not applicable to that particular trip (*e.g.*,

a NEFOP observer trainee should “Demonstrate where and how a marine mammal watch would be performed” (#17) regardless of what gear type or sampling protocols they are following).

The trip trainer candidate should perform all duties of a certified trip trainer, including coordinating with the “trainee” before the trip, reviewing and evaluating species ID, sampling methods, documentation, and communication with the captain and crew, as well as submitting a full evaluation of the “trainee”.

Trip evaluations should be submitted within 48 hours of the training trip to the Data Quality Lead, Data Editor Lead, and program COTR.

### Trip Trainer Candidate Qualifications and Certification Process

Observer service providers must submit a formal request for a trip trainer certification trip. Candidates will undergo a thorough data quality evaluation. To be considered for a certification trip, the candidate must:

- Be certified in the program for which they are requesting trip trainer certification, with at least 6 months since initial training;
- Have observed at least 20 seadays in the previous 6 months in that program (*e.g.*, if a candidate is seeking to become certified as an ASM trip trainer, any NEFOP or IFS trips will not count toward their seaday total); and
- Maintain a good data quality standing (*i.e.*, not be on priority or probation, no outstanding trip issues)

Qualified candidates must take a trip trainer certification trip with an FSB staff member. The service provider and the COTR will coordinate to schedule the certification trip. During the trip, the staff member will act as a new observer trainee. The trip trainer candidate should perform all duties of a certified trip trainer (see *Trip Trainer Role Expectations* below), including submitting a full evaluation of the “trainee”. All trip documentation will use the “trainee’s” observer ID and trip number.

After the trip, the FSB staff member will complete an evaluation of the trip trainer candidate (see *Trip Trainer Certification Evaluation*) for review by the FSB leads (program COTR, Area Lead, and Data Quality Lead). The Data Quality Lead will notify the observer and service provider if and when the candidate is approved. The candidate will be considered a certified trip trainer as of that date, and may act as a trainer for new observer trainees.

### Becoming Trip Trainer Certified in more than one Observer Program

Trip trainers may be certified in both the NEFOP and ASM programs and take observer trainees on both types of trips. The trainer must be complete trip trainer certification in one program before requesting an additional trip trainer certification. The trainer must meet the aforementioned qualifications for the program for which they are requesting additional certification (see *Trip Trainer Candidate Qualifications*). ASM trip trainers will have to complete a second trip trainer certification trip with an FSB staff member to become a NEFOP trip trainer; NEFOP trainers transitioning to ASM trainers do not.

Currently there are no requirements for trip trainers in the IFS program.

## Maintaining the Trip Trainer Certification

Trip trainer certification will expire one (1) year from initial certification, or one (1) year from the date of the last trip taken as a trip trainer. If the certification has lapsed, the service provider may request a review by FSB staff, who may decide to extend the certification by no more than six (6) months from the expiration date.

In addition, if the trainer is not active (*i.e.*, taking their own solo trips) for more than six (6) months in a particular gear or program, they may no longer take trainees on those types of trips. If they resume taking trips in that gear/program, they must wait for a minimum of one trip to be fully edited and debriefed before resuming trip trainer trips. For example, if a trainer's last NEFOP gillnet trip was taken in May 2014, they cannot take a trainee on a NEFOP gillnet trip in December 2014. If they complete NEFOP gillnet trip which is fully edited and debriefed in January 2015, then they may resume taking trainees on NEFOP gillnet trips. The service provider may request, via the COTR, that the trip is edited as a priority.

Trainers may not take observer trainees out if the trainer is on any priority or probationary status. They may resume trip trainer duties as soon as they complete the requirements of the priority or probation plan. If FSB receives negative feedback from industry members regarding a trip trainer's behavior or quality, on solo trips or as a trainer, they must immediately stop taking observer trainees while FSB investigates the matter. If the issue is determined to be a valid data quality concern, the trip trainer certification will be revoked. The service provider may request a review of the trip trainer certification no sooner than six (6) months after the date of revocation. FSB may decide at that time to reinstate trip trainer certification, with or without another trip trainer certification trip.

# NEFSC FSB Trip Trainer Certification Evaluation Sheet

Northeast Fisheries Science Center Fisheries Sampling Branch

Candidate's Name	Candidate's Provider:
FSB Staff Name:	FSB Staff Position:
Obs/Trip ID:	Date of Trip:
Vessel:	Port:
Trip Type (circle one):      NEFOP      ASM	Gear Type:

To be completed by the FSB staff member acting in the role of a "trainee" on a trip trainer certification trip. Please evaluate the trip trainer candidate's proficiency completing each task. Mark "Y" (yes) or "N" (no) to indicate that the candidate successfully performed each activity. Comments must be provided for any task for which "N" is indicated. Include any additional comments related to the candidate's competence in the provided boxes, and complete the summary on the last page. The trip trainer candidate must complete a Training Trip Evaluation for the "trainee".

ACTIVITY	Completed Efficiently?		COMMENTS
<b>PREPAREDNESS</b>			
1. Review appropriate usage of all required reference materials, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Biological Sampling Manual</li> <li>• Program Manual</li> <li>• ID guides</li> <li>• Cheatsheets</li> </ul>	Y	N	
2. Review appropriate usage of with all required equipment, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large and small scale</li> <li>• Calipers</li> <li>• LF board</li> <li>• Digital camera</li> <li>• Field notebook</li> </ul>	Y	N	
3. Ensure trainee explains observer duties to captain, and offers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comment card</li> <li>• Fishermen's Comment Log (if appropriate)</li> <li>• Copy of the trip data</li> </ul>	Y	N	
<b>SAFETY CHECKLIST</b>			
4. Assist with completing the Pre-Trip Vessel Safety Checklist in a timely manner, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Locating and obtaining accurate information from safety equipment</li> <li>• Asking for help from crew when appropriate</li> </ul>	Y	N	

ACTIVITY	Completed Efficiently?		COMMENTS
5. Bring all required safety equipment for self (trainer), and make sure trainee has gear, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PFD (and wear on deck)</li> <li>• Immersion suit (and proper storage)</li> <li>• Personal EPIRB</li> </ul>	Y	N	<i>{List any equipment not brought}</i>
<b>GEAR INFORMATION</b>			
6. Ensure measurements of gear are taken properly, and configuration recorded accurately.	Y	N	
7. Discuss safety awareness, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifying gear hazards</li> <li>• Deciding when to go out on deck</li> <li>• Using caution while on deck</li> </ul>	Y	N	
<b>HAUL INFORMATION</b>			
8. Make sure trainee records haul data in an organized manner, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dates/Times/Locations</li> <li>• Environmental Conditions</li> <li>• Gear Condition</li> </ul>	Y	N	
<b>SPECIES ID</b>			
9. Review species identification and field characteristics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reference observer resources for identification</li> </ul>	Y	N	
<b>CATCH ESTIMATION</b>			
10. Review and help implement proper catch estimation techniques	Y	N	
11. Ensure trainee records accurate data in an organized manner, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All actual and estimated weights (<i>e.g.</i>, tally/tote)</li> <li>• Checker pen dimensions and depths</li> <li>• Subsample weights</li> </ul>	Y	N	
<b>BIOLOGICAL SAMPLING</b>			
12. Discuss how to establish a safe and operational sampling station, with view of all catch	Y	N	
13. Instruct and/or demonstrate taking biological samples from priority species, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Length frequencies</li> <li>• Age structures (NEFOP)</li> <li>• Reference Biological Sampling Manual, as needed</li> </ul>	Y	N	
<b>PROTECTED SPECIES</b>			
14. Review where and how a marine mammal watch would be performed (NEFOP)	Y	N	

ACTIVITY	Completed Efficiently?		COMMENTS
15. <i>If an incidental take occurs, help:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collect incidental take data and photos</li> <li>• Collect samples (NEFOP)</li> <li>• Follow incidental take protocols</li> </ul>	Y	N	
<b>OVERALL</b>			
16. Facilitate communication with the captain and crew.	Y	N	
17. Identify and correct any mistakes made by trainee.	Y	N	
18. Overall attitude and ability to relay information to a trainee. (Mark on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being very poor and 5 being excellent).			

**ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:**

Summarize the candidate's overall performance during the training trip. Be sure to include feedback on both positive (what they did well) and negative (where they can improve) aspects, as well as the candidate's potential ability to complete the duties of a trip trainer with observer trainees.