

Fisheries Information Notice 5 of 2013 Prohibition on High Grading



The Sea Fisheries Protection Authority has issued Fisheries Information Notice 05-2013 “Prohibition on high grading”.

LEGISLATION

References: EU 850/1998 Main Technical Regulation
EU 1224/2009 Control regulation
EU 227/2013 Amendment to Main Technical Regulation.

Introduction

EU 227-2913 issued on 13 March 2013 by the EU Council and Parliament amended the Main Technical Regulation and made permanent many of the provisions previously introduced in the transitional technical measures first introduced in 2009. Included in the text are measures to reduce discarding by prohibiting high grading and slipping.

Discarding and High Grading are not the same activity

Discarding:

Discarding is an unavoidable consequence of a legal requirement to comply with a specific control measure, for example not exceeding a prescribed quota, or insuring compliance with a minimum landing size or catch composition rule. Discarding is currently a necessary action for the master of a vessel under certain control provisions presently in place. Master of Community fishing vessels are required to record in their fishing logbook all discards in excess of 50kg of any species

High Grading

High grading is considered as a serious infringement and is defined in the Control Regulation as the failure to land any species subject to a quota caught during a fishing operation, unless such landing would be contrary to obligations provided for in the rules of the common fisheries policy in fisheries or fishing zones where such rules apply.

High grading is the deliberate and unlawful failure to retain and land any species subject to quota, during fishing operations, which can be legally landed. In such an instance fishers may be seeking an economic advantage from disposing of an unwanted or less profitable part of the catch.

Other Provisions:

Additional requirements have also been introduced which seek to reduce discarding...

Moving-on provisions

Where the quantity of undersized mackerel, herring or horse mackerel exceeds 10 % of the total quantity of the catches in any one haul, the vessel shall move fishing grounds.

Prohibition on slipping

It is prohibited to release mackerel, herring or horse mackerel before the net is fully taken on board a fishing vessel resulting in the loss of dead or dying fish.

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Automatic grading equipment

The carrying or use on board a fishing vessel of equipment which is capable of automatically grading by size or by sex herring or mackerel or horse mackerel shall be prohibited.

However, the carrying and use of such equipment shall be permitted provided that:

- (a) the vessel does not simultaneously carry or use on board either towed gear of mesh size less than 70 millimetres or one or more purse seines or similar fishing gears;
or
- (b) (i) the whole of the catch which may be lawfully retained on board is stored in a frozen state, the graded fish are frozen immediately after grading and no graded fish are returned to the sea;
and
(ii) the equipment is installed and located on the vessel in such a way as to ensure immediate freezing and not to allow the return of marine organisms to the sea.

The practice of high grading is not condoned by fishers concerned about long term sustainability of the industry, it is also a difficult behaviour to detect and prevent. The Sea Fisheries Protection Authority request members of the public in particular mariners who observe evidence of disposal of quantities of fish of legal landing size to provide such information in confidence to:

Confidential Telephone Line: 1890 76 76 76

E-Mail: fish@sfpa.ie

or your local Sea Fisheries Protection Office details available at www.sfpa.ie

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