



FACT SHEET: EXEMPTED FISHING PERMITS

11

Many fishermen are interested in applying for exempted fishing permits (EFPs), which allow experimental fisheries that are exempt from usual fishing regulations. EFPs are recommended by the Council and granted by NOAA Fisheries.

WHAT IS AN EFP?

An exempted fishing permit is a permit issued by NMFS to allow fishing activities that would otherwise be prohibited. These permits are issued for limited experimental purposes to support projects that could benefit fisheries and the environment. EFPs can be issued to Federal or state agencies, marine fish commissions, nonprofit organizations, or others, including individuals. An EFP applicant need not be the owner or operator of the vessel(s) for which the EFP is requested.

Examples of past projects supported by an EFP include the development of new gear types for an underutilized fishery and development of devices that reduce prohibited species bycatch.

WHO CAN APPLY?

Anyone who is planning on fishing activities that would otherwise be prohibited by the regulations may apply for an EFP. The permit is issued to the applicant but a copy must be on the vessel at all times during the project.

HOW DO I APPLY?

The Council's operating procedures explain how to apply for EFPs at <http://tinyurl.com/pwcqkwf>. An example EFP (to fish trawl permits with fixed gear in a community-based fishing association) is available at <http://tinyurl.com/olwouvz>.

HOW LONG DOES THE REVIEW PROCESS TAKE?

It depends on the complexity of the project and the Council's meeting schedule. If you plan on doing an experiment, the experimental design may require review by the Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee (if requested by the Council) before a permit may be issued. You should work with the Science Center on the experimental design before submitting an EFP application to better assure a sound scientific design of the experiment. This will speed the review process. NMFS may need to write an environmental analysis of the impacts of issuing the EFP. This document supports the decision making and informs the public of the EFP project. The Regional Administrator is also required to consult with the Pacific Fishery Management Council before issuing an EFP. This usually involves a Federal Register notice of the receipt of your application and your presentation of the EFP project at a Council meeting. Applicants should plan on at least 6 to 12 months from the date of application submittal before the EFP is issued.

For more information on EFPs, contact Jim Seger (james.seger@noaa.gov).

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