

DMF Vibrio Control Plan Quick Facts

According to the Mass. Division of Marine Fisheries, **critical violations** of the Vibrio Control Plan include **incomplete tags or lack of tags before landing, and/or lack of adequate icing.**

Tags

All shellfish harvested commercially and/or moved off-site under a propagation permit must be tagged - including seed, oysters for culling operations and shellfish for personal consumption.

Tags must now include decimal points for growing areas as follows: MA CCB 11.0 (Wellfleet Harbor), MA CCB 12.1 (Herring River), MA CCB 13.0 (Chipman's Cove and Inner Harbor area inside breakwater), MA CCB 13.2 (Duck Creek), MA CCB 13.3 (under Harbormaster rocks) and MA CCB 14.0 (Blackfish Creek, Loagy Bay, Lt. Island north).

All containers must have individual tags with the commercial permit holder's name and state shellfishing permit number, date, **time of harvest**, time of icing (unless batch tagging for ice), harvest areas, e.g. MA CCB 11.0, and type and quantity of shellfish.

- Times need to be exact – FDA has noted that using all zeros and fives, e.g. 9:15 and 11:15, is not precise enough.
- Harvest area should read: **MACCB_____**
- **Exceptions:**
 - o Batch tags are okay **for icing time only**. Icing time is the time the last bag goes into the ice. Batch tag gets put on the container holding the individual bags, which each have a harvest tag with time of harvest, etc. as outlined above.
 - o For grant holders, batch tags are okay **for transporting seed and oysters for culling operations**. Tag should be green and state "Aquaculturally reared: To be culled" on the way off site, and "Aquaculturally reared: To be culled, for return to site," on the way back to your grant. They should specify the number and type of containers, e.g. 52 grow bags.

Logbooks and tags must be filled out **before transport**, except the dealer information which can be done at the dealer. **Logbooks and tags must be legible and indelible (permanent ink)**. If using more than one logbook, label the books "Book 1 of 2" and "Book 2 of 2." Logbooks should be with you at all times.

For grant holders, containers used for resubmergence must bear a resubmergence tag with the date it was resubmerged, and product must be in a specific, segregated area of your grant.

Icing Regulation (2024)

- Mesh bags containing oysters shall be completely surrounded by ice, including at the bottom of the container and each level of bags, so that each bag is **continuously and completely** covered with ice; OR
- Loose oysters placed into a shellfish icing container must be completely surrounded by ice, including the bottom of the container, with a layer of ice that **continuously and completely** covers the top of the oysters; OR
- Fully submerging oysters into an icing container holding an ice slurry or cold water dip that is at or below 45°F.

Other Important Points

- The FDA views Wellfleet Harbor as one hydrographic area, so for example, a Vp. closure in CCB 14.0 could trigger a closure for the entire harbor.
- Only ice from an **approved water source** may be used for any oyster icing, including overwintering. Using water from an approved growing area for slurries is also allowed.
- **Oysters need shading** from sun and birds while harvesting and/or processing and prior to icing.
- No off-site culling of product before delivery. No overnight holding of product. No unattended drop offs at dealers.
- Oysters must be brought to the dealer **within 10 hours of harvest on the same calendar day** and **must already be 45°F or less when you arrive at the dealer**. Both harvester and dealer need to be present for delivery.
- Product must be covered during transport. Containers with product must be locked if left unaccompanied.
- All vehicles, boats and other transportation need a human waste bucket with 3" high lettering: HUMAN WASTE.
- Dogs, cats, and other pets are not allowed on boats, grants or the flats.
- For grant operations, oysters must be resubmerged for 10 days if they leave your license site. They need to be put back in a separate area of your grant and tagged with the resub date.

Footnotes

- DMF notes that Vp. has one of the fastest growth rates of any bacteria. It is the leading cause of seafood-borne illness.
- Icing does not reduce the Vp. load that already exists in oysters, but it prevents further multiplication.¹
- Subtidal oysters take longer to purge Vp. than intertidal oysters.

¹ Chrissy Petitpas, PhD, Aquaculture and Vibrio Coordinator. MA Division of Marine Fisheries. Oyster Harvest, Handling, and Vibrio Control Training 2021 via <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b3CxOTSuShE>.

FPP Outbreak & Response Unit (ORU) logs in reports of positive Vp cases in humans and notifies:

- DFG Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF), and
- FPP Seafood Supervisor

FPP Seafood Unit will:

- Coordinate with BoHs when needed
- Collect records from retail and wholesale
- Conduct traceback of supply chain

If shellfish was harvested in MA, FPP will:

- Notify BEH Director
- Forward findings to DMF
- Forward any DMF notices to BEH

If shellfish was harvested out-of-state, FPP will:

- Notify FDA
- Forward findings to the other state

If oysters from one MA harvest area caused multiple illnesses, then FPP will:

(1) Determine the oyster harvest dates for all cases on the following chart:

How many cases consumed oysters which were harvested within 30 days ?	1 to 3 cases	4 cases	5 to 10 cases	11 or more cases
Or, how many cases consumed oysters which were harvested on the same day ?	-	-	2 to 3 cases	4 or more cases

(2) Use # of cases and date range to assign risk and determine next steps:

What is level of risk?	0	1	2	3
Will DMF notify town(s) with harvest area?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Will the harvest area have to close?	No	Yes; 7-day precautionary	Yes; 14-day required	Yes; 21-day required
Will FDA require a recall?	No	No	No	Yes
Will FDA require a consumer advisory?	No	No	No	Yes