

Maine Lobster Apprenticeship Program



**21 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333-0021
(207) 624-6550**

**Marine Patrol
(207) 624-6571
Division I – (207) 633-9595
Division II – (207) 667-3373**

**License Eligibility Specialist
(207) 624-6549**

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This brochure is designed to answer frequently asked questions pertaining to obtaining a Commercial Lobster and Crab Harvesting License. If you have any further questions, please contact the License Eligibility Specialist at the telephone number on the cover. ****Note: Laws & Regulations are subject to change. Do not rely upon this for legal purposes.****

How do I obtain a Commercial Lobster and Crab Harvesting License?

To obtain a Commercial Lobster and Crab Harvesting License you must enter the apprentice program. You may enter the apprentice program by purchasing an Apprentice License or Student License providing you are eligible for a student license. The apprentice program consists of a minimum of 24 months, documenting 1,000 hours, 200 fishing days with up to three sponsors **AND** apprentice/student fishermen must provide documentation of successful completion of a United States Coast Guard approved Fishing Vessel Drill Conductor Course.

- *If you are under age 18 and you complete the program in a limited entry zone, you are eligible to purchase your commercial license once you turn 17 but **MUST** purchase it prior to turning 18 to avoid being subject to placement on a waiting list .*

Apprentices/Students may only enter a zone **IF** they apprenticed in that zone. Sponsor's must have held a Class I, II or III lobster and crab fishing license for at least 5 years and have the same declared zone as the apprentice.

What is the difference between an Apprentice License and a Student License?

- You must be a full-time student who is at least 8 years of age and under age 23 in order to purchase a student license.
- If you are age 18 and over you must provide DMR with verification of your full-time high school or college enrollment.
- Students can purchase the following amount of tags:
 - 8 – 10 – up to 10 tags
 - 11 – 13 – up to 50 tags
 - 14 – 22 – up to 150 tags.
- Students may document fishing days while fishing their own traps as well as time fishing with their sponsor(s). However, your sponsor(s) must be aware of the time you are fishing your own traps and must sign your logsheets.
- A student and under 18 apprentice license both cost \$56.00; an apprentice license for age 18 and over is \$114.00.
- **Falsification of records may result in license suspension or ability to obtain a commercial lobster license.**

NOTE: Providing the laws remain as they are now on your initial commercial license year you are allowed to purchase 300 tags. You may only purchase 100 additional tags the following year. For example if you purchase 100 tags your initial license year, the following year you are only allowed to purchase 200 tags.

What are the responsibilities of an Apprentice or Student license holder?

- **Be sure to obtain an apprentice or student license each year *prior* to documenting time. Do not document time without a license, as it will not be counted towards the apprentice program.**
- Your sponsor(s) must have a current commercial license prior to your obtaining a student or apprentice license.
- You may document up to 200 hours of your entire apprenticeship as gear time. **Gear time does not include boat repairs.**
- Your apprenticeship start date begins on the first fishing or gear day documented with an apprentice or student license.
- To meet the requirements of the apprentice program over a minimum of 24 months, you must document 1,000 hours, 200 fishing days and submit documentation of successful completion of a United States Coast Guard approved Fishing Vessel Drill Conductor Course.
- If a person has finished 200 logged days, 1,000 hours and provided the Department with documentation of having successfully completed the USCG approved Fishing Vessel Drill Conductor Course, then their eligibility date is 24 months from the first documented fishing day.
- If a person has been in the program for over 24 months from the first documented fishing day, then their eligibility date is the date the Department receives the completed logs and documentation of the having completed the Course, whichever comes last.

Completed log sheets MUST be signed by your local Marine Patrol Officer every 250 hours and received by the License Eligibility Specialist within 30 days of the date the 250th hour was logged.

Completing Your Log Sheet

- Log your fishing days and have them initialed by your sponsor(s).
- Only whole hours can be documented. ½ hours will not be accepted and you must round down to the nearest whole number.
- Any day logged consisting of at least 1 hour may be counted toward the apprentice program.
- You may have up to three sponsors. You **must** keep a separate log sheet for each sponsor.
- Keep the log sheets in your possession. If something happens to your log sheet, gets misplaced on the boat, etc. you will have nothing to help you document your time.
- You must complete all information on the log sheet and your sponsor must sign the log sheet as well as initial each daily entry.
- **Time will not be counted if log sheets are not received by the License Eligibility Specialist within 30 days of the 250th hour being logged.**
- When requesting a Marine Patrol Officer's signature, you must present your apprentice or student license with the completed log sheet.
- Keep the yellow copy for your records-THIS IS YOUR ONLY RECEIPT-and submit the completed log sheet to
License Eligibility Specialist, Department of Marine Resources, 21 State House Station, Augusta, Maine 04333-0021.

Do not wait until you have completed all 1,000 hours, 200 days because the time will not count towards the apprentice program.

- You may request additional log sheets by calling 624-6549. Log sheets may also be downloaded from <http://www.maine.gov/dmr/rm/lobster/apprenticelog08.pdf>

What are the responsibilities of the sponsor of a lobster apprentice?

- *The primary purpose of the Lobster Apprentice Program is to ensure that the people entering the fishery understand their responsibilities to the resource and to other fishermen.* The Sponsor is looked upon as the individual who will teach the apprentice good fishing practices, local fishing conditions and current laws and regulations.
- Sponsors must purchase their license prior to the apprentice or student being allowed to name that sponsor on his/her license application.
- Sponsors must initial the log sheet daily to certify that the apprentice or student license holder has gained experience. This includes the knowledge of a student fishing his/her own traps.

Please note your license may be suspended for falsification of records if you sign documented time that has not been fished.

- Sponsors should encourage the apprentice to maintain and keep his/her own log sheets complete and up-to-date.
- EVERY zone requires that a sponsor shall have held a Class I, II or III lobster and crab fishing license for at least 5 years and have the same declared zone the apprentice has declared, in order to sponsor an apprentice/student license holder.

What happens once my apprentice requirements are completed?

- You must fill out a Zone Declaration Form to declare the lobster zone you wish to fish the majority of your traps (51%).
- If your zone is a "limited-entry" zone, you will be placed on the waiting list for that zone based on your eligibility date.