

an operator is valid only when that person is the operator of the vessel.

(iii) A qualifying owner or operator of a charter vessel or headboat may obtain a commercial vessel permit. However, a charter vessel or headboat must adhere to the bag limits when operating as a charter vessel or headboat.

(2) *Fish trap endorsements.* To possess or use a fish trap in the EEZ, a commercial vessel permit for reef fish with a fish trap endorsement must be issued to the vessel and must be on board. However, see paragraph (n) of this section regarding a moratorium on fish trap endorsements. In addition, a color code for marking the vessel and trap buoys must be obtained from the Regional Director—see § 641.6.

(3) [Reserved]

(4) *Dealer permits.* A dealer who receives from a fishing vessel reef fish harvested from the EEZ must obtain an annual dealer permit. To be eligible for such permit, an applicant must have a valid state wholesaler's license in the state(s) where the dealer operates, if required by such state(s), and must have a physical facility at a fixed location in such state(s).

(b) *Application for a vessel permit—*

(1) An application for a commercial vessel permit or a charter vessel/headboat permit must be submitted to the Regional Director and signed by the owner (in the case of a corporation, a qualifying officer or shareholder; in the case of a partnership, a qualifying general partner) or operator of the vessel. After receipt of a complete application, at least 30 days must be allowed for processing the application and issuing a permit. All permits are mailed to owners, whether the applicant is an owner or an operator.

(2) An applicant must provide the following:

(i) A copy of the vessel's valid U.S. Coast Guard certificate of documentation or, if not documented, a copy of its valid state registration certificate.

(ii) The vessel's name and official number.

(iii) The name, address, telephone number, and other identifying information of the owner and of the applicant, if other than the owner.

(iv) Any other information concerning the vessel, gear characteristics, principal fisheries engaged in, or fishing areas requested by the Regional Director.

(v) Any other information that may be necessary for the issuance or administration of the permit.

(3) In addition, an applicant for a commercial vessel permit—

(i) Must provide documentation of earned income that meets the criteria of paragraph (a)(1)(ii) of this section; and

(ii) If fish traps will be used to harvest reef fish, must provide the following information:

(A) The number, dimensions, and estimated cubic volume of the fish traps that will be used; and

(B) The applicant's desired color code for use in identifying his or her vessel and buoys (white is not an acceptable color code).

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(f) \* \* \* (1) The Regional Director will issue a permit at any time to an applicant if the application is complete and, in the case of an application for a commercial vessel permit, the applicant meets the earned income requirement specified in paragraph (a)(1)(ii) of this section. \* \* \*

\* \* \* \* \*

(h) \* \* \* A vessel permit or endorsement or dealer permit issued under this section is not transferable or assignable, except as provided under paragraph (m) of this section for a commercial vessel permit or as provided under paragraph (n) of this section for a fish trap endorsement. \* \* \*

\* \* \* \* \*

(m) *Moratorium on commercial vessel permits.* This paragraph (m) is effective through December 31, 2000.

(1) Except for an application for renewal of an existing commercial vessel permit or as provided in paragraphs (m)(2) and (m)(3) of this section, no applications for commercial vessel permits will be accepted.

(2) An owner of a permitted vessel may transfer the commercial vessel permit to another vessel owned by the same entity by returning the existing permit with an application for a commercial vessel permit for the replacement vessel.

(3) An owner whose earned income qualified for the commercial vessel permit may transfer that permit to the owner of another vessel or to the new owner when he or she sells the permitted vessel. The owner of a vessel that is to receive the transferred permit must return the existing permit to the Regional Director with an application for a commercial vessel permit for his or her vessel. Such new owner may receive a commercial vessel permit for that vessel, and renew it for the first calendar year after obtaining it, without meeting the earned income requirement of paragraph (a)(1)(ii) of this section. However, to renew the commercial vessel permit for the second calendar year after the transfer, the new owner must meet that earned income

requirement not later than the first calendar year after the permit transfer takes place.

(4) A fish trap endorsement that is not renewed or that is revoked will not be reissued. A permit is considered to be not renewed when an application for renewal is not received by the Regional Director within 1 year of the expiration date of the permit.

(n) *Moratorium on fish trap endorsements.* The provisions of this paragraph (n) are effective through February 7, 1997.

(1) A fish trap endorsement will not be issued or renewed unless the current owner of the commercially permitted vessel for which the endorsement is requested has a record of landings of reef fish from fish traps in the EEZ of the Gulf of Mexico during 1991 or 1992, as reported on fishing vessel logbooks received by the Science and Research Director on or before November 19, 1992. An owner will not be issued fish trap endorsements for vessels in numbers exceeding the number of vessels for which the owning entity had the requisite reported landings in 1991 or 1992.

(2) An owner of a vessel with a fish trap endorsement may transfer the endorsement to another vessel owned by the same entity by returning the existing endorsement with an application for an endorsement for the replacement vessel.

(3) A fish trap endorsement is not transferable upon change of ownership of a vessel with a fish trap endorsement, except as follows:

(i) A fish trap endorsement is transferable when the change of ownership of the permitted vessel is from one to another of the following: Husband, wife, son, daughter, brother, sister, mother, or father.

(ii) In the event that a vessel with a fish trap endorsement has a change of ownership that is directly related to the disability or death of the owner, the Regional Director may issue a fish trap endorsement, temporarily or permanently, with the reef fish commercial permit that is issued for the vessel under the new owner. Such new owner will be the person specified by the owner or his/her legal guardian, in the case of a disabled owner, or by the will or executor/administrator of the estate, in the case of a deceased owner. (Change of ownership of a vessel with a commercial reef fish permit upon disability or death of an owner is considered a purchase of a permitted vessel and paragraph (m)(3) of this section applies regarding a commercial reef fish permit for the vessel under the new owner.)