

Shellfish Harvesting Quick Facts

Before purchasing any shellfish licenses:

Shellfish Harvester Safety training must be completed and current. Valid for 5 years.

Warm Water Harvest Season: May 1 - October 31

- Additional Permits required if working **past** the curfew
 - Husbandry, Shellfish Icing, GPS
 - Request Warm Water Harvest Permits through [VMRC website](#).
- Shading over shellfish required.
 - **For the exception of seed**

Refer to the [regulation](#) for further information.

Public Ground Harvest requirements for oysters: (Commercial)

- ★ Current Commercial Fishing License (CFL)
- ★ Current Oyster User Fee All-Gear or HAND ONLY (Seaside residence only)
- ★ Current Gear License
- ★ Shellfish tags

Additional James River Permits required:

- ★ Current James River Seed, Hand Scrape, Transport Permits.
- ★ Permits are issued by Marine Police Officers
- ★ Call MRC Dispatch at (757)247-2265 to be connected to a Marine Police Officer that can issue the permit(s).

Aquaculture Harvest requirements for oysters: (Private Ground - Commercial)

Lease owners or those REPORTING harvest:

- ★ Current Aquaculture User Fee
- ★ Current Aquaculture Product Owner Permit
- ★ Current Aquaculture Vessel Permit (Optional)
- ★ Shellfish tags

Harvesters NOT reporting harvest:

- ★ Current Aquaculture Harvester Permit
- ★ Shellfish tags

Aquaculture Harvest requirements for clams: (Private Ground - Commercial)

- ★ Current Clam Product Owner Permit
- ★ Current Clam Vessel Permit (Optional)

Licenses / Permits can be purchased at a MRC Licensing Agent **EXCEPT** for CFL.

Harvesting Gear License Quick Facts

Public Ground Gear

Refer to the [regulation](#) for current season dates and gear information.

Oysters by Hand

Oyster Patent Tongs - Single

Oyster Patent Tongs - Double

Oyster Dredge Public Ground (Poc. Tangier ONLY)

Oysters by Hand Tong

Oysters by Hand Scrape

Clam Patent Tongs - Single

Gear Definitions:

Oyster Patent Tong:

- Maximum weight of 100 pounds in gross weight, with attachments (not including rope).
- Maximum tooth length of 4 inches.

Oyster Dredge:

- Maximum weight of 150 pounds, with attachments.
- Maximum width of 50 inches.
- Maximum tooth length of 4 inches.

Hand Tong:

- Any pincers, nippers, tongs, or similar device used in catching oysters
- Consists of two shafts or handles attached to opposable and complementary pincers, baskets, or containers
- Operated entirely by hand, from the surface of the water
- No external or internal power source.

Hand Scrape:

- any device or instrument used or usable for the purpose of extracting or removing shellfish from a water bottom or the bed of a body of water.
- Catching bar with an inside diameter of **no more than** 22 inches.

Private Ground

IF using mechanical equipment to harvest oysters:

- **Must obtain a dredge permit from MPO.**
- **Each vessel working the lease needs a permit.**
- **Must be at least 3 acres in one tract or adjoining tracts.**
- **Lease rent must be paid.**
- **Free permit.**
- **No other gear license required.**

Certified Oyster Buyer Quick Facts

Must be a current Certified Shellfish Dealer from Virginia Dept. of Health/Division of Shellfish Safety (VDH/DSS)

Must be pre-authorized by a member of the Conservation and Replenishment Department annually.

User Fee, License & Permit requirements:

- Must purchase Oyster Buyer User Fee.
- Must purchase the corresponding Oyster Buyer license.
- Obtain a Place of Business, and vessel or truck permit (free).

Oyster Buyers Licenses can ONLY be purchased at the Main Office.

Shucking House Quick Facts

Must be a current Certified Shellfish Dealer from Virginia Dept. of Health/Division of Shellfish Safety (VDH/DSS)

User Fee, License & Permit requirements:

- Must purchase Shucking House User Fee.
- Must purchase the corresponding Shucking House license.

Shucking House Licenses can ONLY be purchased at the Main Office.

Personal Use Harvest - NOT FOR SALE (Non - Commercial)

Oysters (household use ONLY)

[§ 28.2-226](#). Exemptions from licensing requirements.

- 1 bushel of oysters in any one day.
- Taken by hand or with ordinary tongs.
- During the legally prescribed oyster season on public grounds.
- Open for harvest or unleased bottom open for harvest.
- Licenses, permits or tagging of shellfish NOT required.

Daily time limits - Regulation

Regulation: [4VAC20-720-60](#). Day and time limit.

- Harvest permitted on Saturday and Sunday.

Clams (household use ONLY)

[§ 28.2-226](#). Exemptions from licensing requirements.

- Maximum of 250 clams in any one day.
- Taken by hand or with ordinary tongs.

Refer to [VMRC Chesapeake Bay Map](#) for further information pertaining to: Private Oyster Leases, Shellfish Condemnation Zones by VDH, Open Harvest Areas, Public Grounds, Public Clamming Grounds.

QUESTIONS ABOUT SHELLFISH OYSTER USER FEES, PERMITS OR LICENSES?



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Oyster User Fees:

Types of Oyster User Fees

For Harvesters

Public Ground Harvest
(378) By Hand Only (SEASIDE residents): \$50.00
(379) All Gear: \$300.00

Private Ground Harvest
(387) Aquaculture User Fee: \$50.00

****Must have Shellfish Harvester Training to purchase Shellfish licenses.**

For Certified Oyster Buyers

With Single Boat/Truck
(385) Oyster Single Buyer User Fee: \$100

With Multiple Boats/Trucks
(386) Oyster Multiple Buyer User Fee: \$300

****Single Oyster Buyer:** using a single truck or location

****Multiple Oyster Buyer:** using multiple trucks or locations

For Shucking Houses

(381) Less than 1,000 Gallons: \$500.00
(382) Less than 10,000 Gallons: \$1,000.00
(383) Less than 25,000 Gallons: \$2,000.00
(384) More than 25,000 Gallons: \$4,000.00

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Permits and licenses

Types of Licenses / Permits

For Harvesters

Public Ground Harvest
(101) Oyster By Hand Only : \$10.00
(102) Oyster By Patent Tongs - Single : \$35.00
(105) Oyster By Patent Tongs - Double : \$70.00
(103) Oyster By Dredge (Poc./Tangier ONLY): \$50.00
(104) Oyster By Hand Tong: \$10.00
(106) Oyster By Hand Scrape: \$50.00
(112) Clam Patent Tongs - Single : \$58.00

Private Ground Harvest
(108) Oyster Aquaculture Product Owner Permit \$10.00
(109) Oyster Aquaculture Harvester Permit \$5.00
(110) Oyster Aquaculture Vessel Permit \$0.00
(119) Clam Aquaculture Product Owner Permit \$10.00

For Certified Oyster Buyers

With Single Boat/Truck
(412) Oyster Single Buyer License: \$50.00
(414) Oyster Buyer Boat/Truck Identifier Permit: \$0

With Multiple Boats/Trucks
(413) Oyster Multiple Buyer License: \$100
(414) Oyster Buyer Boat/Truck Identifier Permit: \$0

**** (414) needed for Place of Business and vehicle(s) / vessel(s)**

****Single Oyster Buyer:** using a single truck or location
****Multiple Oyster Buyer:** using multiple trucks or locations.

Licenses For Shucking Houses

(401) Less than 1,000 Gallons: \$12.00
(402) Up to 10,000 Gallons: \$33.00
(403) Up to 25,000 Gallons: \$74.00
(404) Up to 50,000 Gallons: \$124.00
(405) Up to 100,000 Gallons: \$207.00
(406) Up to 200,000 Gallons: \$290.00
(407) More than 200,000 Gallons: \$456.00