

Gulf of Mexico Commercial Red Snapper Fishery
Changes to the Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) Program

Frequently Asked Questions

March 2009



Please Note: [Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Amendment 29](#) would implement a new IFQ program for groupers and tilefishes. The proposed rule implementing the amendment also makes changes to align the Red Snapper IFQ program with the new program. The Gulf of Mexico Fisheries Management Council has submitted Amendment 29 to NOAA Fisheries Service for Secretarial Review. If the amendment is approved, the Grouper and Tilefish IFQ Program and changes to the Red Snapper IFQ Program would be implemented January 1, 2010.

Vessel Accounts

What is a vessel account, and what would be its purpose?

- Each vessel used to land red snapper would have a vessel account. The vessel account would have a unique personal identification number (PIN) to be used by the captain when completing a landing transaction.
- The purpose of the vessel account is to hold allocation required to land IFQ species.
- The vessel account effectively would replace the fisherman assignee account currently in use. Vessel accounts would be associated with a **vessel**, not an individual.

How would vessel accounts be established?

- A person who has established an IFQ shareholder account online would establish a vessel account through that IFQ shareholder account for each vessel.
- Only one vessel account could be established per vessel, but multiple vessel accounts could be established under each IFQ shareholder account.

What kind of restrictions would be placed on vessel accounts?

- Vessel accounts could only hold allocation for use in landing and selling IFQ species. Vessel accounts could not hold shares.
- Allocation could be transferred into a vessel account from any IFQ shareholder account, allowing for easy transfer of allocation at sea if landings exceed allocation already in the vessel account.
- However, allocation could only be transferred out of a vessel account to the IFQ shareholder account under which it was established, preventing sale of allocation without the shareholder's consent.
- The vessel account could not be transferred to another vessel.

How would vessel accounts affect the landing notification?

- Before a landing notification for the vessel was submitted, the vessel account associated with that vessel would need to have enough allocation for the red snapper on board.
- To improve enforceability of the IFQ program, the estimated pounds (gutted weight) of red snapper on board would be included in the landing notification.

How would vessel accounts affect the vessel endorsement?

- Currently, vessel endorsements are required to show the IFQ participant had established an IFQ shareholder account.
- Vessel accounts accomplish the same purpose; therefore, the vessel endorsement requirement is eliminated from the IFQ program.

Dealer Requirements**How can a dealer correct errors to a landing transaction?**

- If a discrepancy regarding the landing transaction report was discovered after approval, the dealer or vessel account holder (or his or her authorized agent) could submit a landing transaction correction form to correct the landing transaction.
- Both parties would validate the landing correction form.
- The form would need to be received by NOAA Fisheries Service no later than 15 days after the date of the initial landing transaction.

What requirements would be eliminated?

- The annual ex-vessel value report would be eliminated because the information in the report is readily available on the IFQ web site.
- The notice of annulment sent on or about the 61st day after the end of each calendar-year quarter for a dealer whose cost recovery fee payment remains delinquent would be eliminated. This notice did not accompany any new action on the part of NOAA Fisheries Service to curtail the dealer's activities, and so is unnecessary.

Share Transfers**How would the share transfer procedure be simplified?**

- Currently, share transfers can only be accomplished by mailing a notarized form signed by both the transferor and transferee to NOAA Fisheries Service.
- With the proposed regulatory change, share transfers would be accomplished exclusively online via the IFQ web site.
- Approval still would be required from both the transferor and transferee.

Would the allocation transfer procedure change?

- No, allocation transfers can already be accomplished online.

Pre-approval of Landing Locations**Why would landing locations need to be pre-approved?**

- Approving landing locations in advance would ensure the sites actually exist and law enforcement agents could find these sites.

- Only **pre-approved** landing locations could be listed on a landing notification.

What criteria would be used for approval of landing locations?

- Landing locations must be publicly accessible by land and water, and must have a street address. If a particular landing location has no street address on record, global positioning system (GPS) coordinates for an identifiable geographic location must be provided. Other criteria could also be applied.

How could landings locations be submitted for approval?

- Proposed landing locations could be submitted via the IFQ web site or by calling IFQ Customer Service 1-866-425-7627 during normal business hours (8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.).
- However, new landing locations would be approved only at the end of each calendar-year quarter. To have a landing location approved by the end of the calendar-year quarter, it would need to be submitted at least 45 days before the end of the calendar-year quarter.
- Landing locations that have not been pre-approved would no longer be accepted during the landings notification.