

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

Frequently Asked Questions

January 2010



Please Note: [Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Amendment 29](#) implemented a new IFQ program for groupers and tilefishes. The final rule implementing the amendment also made changes to align the Red Snapper IFQ program with the new program. Amendment 29 was approved by NOAA Fisheries Service on July 2, 2009. The Grouper and Tilefish IFQ Program and changes to the Red Snapper IFQ Program were implemented January 1, 2010.

Vessel Accounts

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

- Each vessel used to land red snapper will have a vessel account. The vessel account will 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 will replace the fisherman assignee account that was previously used for red snapper. Vessel accounts will be associated with a **vessel**, not an individual.

How will vessel accounts be established?

- NOAA Fisheries Service will establish vessel accounts for all entities with an IFQ shareholder account and a valid commercial reef fish permit. Vessel accounts information can be obtained on the “Update Account” page with an IFQ shareholder account.
- Only one vessel account can be established per vessel, but multiple vessel accounts can be established under each IFQ shareholder account.

What kinds of restrictions are placed on vessel accounts?

- Vessel accounts can only hold allocation for use in landing and selling IFQ species. Vessel accounts cannot hold shares.
- Allocation can 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 can 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.

- Allocation associated with a vessel account cannot be transferred to another vessel account.

How will vessel accounts affect the landing notification?

- Before a landing notification for the vessel is submitted, the vessel account associated with that vessel must have enough allocation for the red snapper on board. This requirement also applies to groupers and tilefish.
- To improve enforceability of the IFQ program, the estimated pounds (gutted weight) of red snapper (and groupers and tilefish) on board will be included in the landing notification.

How will vessel accounts affect the vessel endorsement?

- Prior to January 1, 2010, vessel endorsements were 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 is discovered after approval, the dealer or vessel account holder (or his or her authorized agent) can submit a landing transaction correction form to correct the landing transaction.
- Both parties must validate the landing correction form.
- The form will need to be received by NOAA Fisheries Service no later than 15 days after the date of the initial landing transaction.

What requirements are eliminated?

- The annual ex-vessel value report is 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 is 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 will the share transfer procedure be simplified?

- Previously, share transfers could only be accomplished by mailing a notarized form signed by both the transferor and transferee to NOAA Fisheries Service.
- With the new Gulf Reef Fish online system, share transfers will be accomplished exclusively online via the IFQ web site.
- Approval is still required from both the transferor and transferee.

Will the allocation transfer procedure change?

- No, allocation transfers can already be accomplished online.

Pre-approval of Landing Locations

Why do landing locations need to be pre-approved?

- Approving landing locations in advance ensures the sites actually exist and law enforcement agents can find these sites.
- Only **pre-approved** landing locations can be listed on a landing notification.

What criteria will 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 may also be applied.

How can landings locations be submitted for approval?

- Proposed landing locations can be submitted via the IFQ web site or by calling IFQ Customer Service 1-877-425-7627 during normal business hours (8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.).
- However, new landing locations will 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 must be submitted at least 45 days before the end of the calendar-year quarter.
- Landing locations that have not been pre-approved will no longer be accepted when making a landings notification after December 31, 2009.