

Can permit fees be refunded if the permit isn't used during the year?

Permit fees are not refundable, except in the event of a season-long closure of the fishery, or if some other circumstance applicable to all permit holders in the fishery prevents a substantial number from participating. The Exxon Valdez oil spill in Prince William Sound provides a good example of the type of situation in which refunds may be authorized.

If a person holds a permit for one fishery, does that person have to buy a crewmember license to participate as a deckhand or crew in another fishery?

Any valid limited entry or interim-use permit may also serve as a crew license for the holder to participate in other commercial fisheries. The one exception may be in fisheries with super-exclusive registration requirements. ADFG regulations should be consulted for details.

Can a partnership or corporation hold a permit?

Limited entry and interim-use permits must be held by an individual person. The person named on the permit must be actively involved in the fishing operation. The permit holder must be able to present photo ID, if requested by authorities.

What if the permit holder is not able to participate in the fishery for some reason?

Limited entry permits can be transferred. The permit holder may permanently transfer the permit to someone else or if the permit holder is unable to participate in the fishery due to a health problem, the holder may request an emergency transfer for the season.

Why is it illegal to lease permits?

The Alaska Legislature made it illegal to lease permits to ensure that fishermen could maintain control of their own livelihoods and to ensure

permits would be controlled by active fishermen with a long-term stake in conservation of fishery resources. Allowing leasing could create a class of permit holders who would be absentee landlords of the fishery who could exploit the actual fishermen forced to lease their permits.

Can aliens obtain permits?

Aliens lawfully admitted to the United States for employment purposes may hold permits. Proof of lawful admission may consist of:

- 1) a green (alien registration) card;
- 2) a naturalization certificate; or
- 3) a certificate of citizenship.

Proof of being lawfully admitted to the United States for employment purposes must be submitted to the Commission. AS 16.05.905 prohibits alien persons not lawfully admitted to the United States from engaging in commercial fishing activities. If you have questions about your status, call the Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission for more information.



This summary information is presented as a courtesy by the Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission but does not modify or replace the agency's statutory requirements in AS 16.43 or regulatory requirements in Chapter 5 of Title 20, Alaska Administrative Code.

Photos courtesy of the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute.

Revised November 2016

Commercial Fishing Permits



Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission

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What is a commercial fishing permit?

In Alaska, a limited entry or an interim-use permit entitles the holder to operate gear in a specific commercial fishery in accordance with Alaska Board of Fisheries regulations. The term “fishery” refers to a unique combination of fishery resource, gear type, and area. For instance, halibut longlining, salmon trolling, and salmon seining are distinct fisheries requiring separate permits. Permits for some species are issued on a statewide basis, while others are valid only for certain areas of the state; for instance, Cook Inlet or Bristol Bay. This use privilege or right to fish is represented and documented by a plastic permit card which is issued annually.

Are there other types of permits?

There are special types of permits that may be issued to private non-profit hatcheries, mariculture farms and accredited educational institutions for commercial fisheries training programs.

How are limited entry or interim-use permit cards used?

A fisherman is required to have the permit card and a photo ID in possession at all times while engaged in commercial fishing activities. When fish are delivered for sale, the permit card along with the species, number of fish, pounds delivered, area caught, etc., are recorded on a paper fish ticket or electronically in eLandings. This information is used by state and federal agencies for fisheries management and enforcement.

What information is printed on the permit cards?

The top line of the permit card indicates the holder’s residency status and the name of the vessel designated on the permit application. The next line is the fishery description. The third line is the person’s name, and the fourth line is the permit number followed by the vessel ADFG number. The bottom line is a sequence number used to track the time period for which the card

is valid, followed by the holder’s unique CFEC ID number followed by the permit holder’s year of birth.

Is it legal for a permit to be leased or fished by someone else?

Leasing is prohibited by the Limited Entry Act. If the permit holder cannot fish due to illness, death, disability, required military/government service or other unavoidable hardship of a temporary, unexpected and unforeseen nature, an emergency transfer of the permit may be requested.

How long do permits remain valid?

There are two basic types of permits issued by the Commission: limited entry permits and interim-use permits. Limited entry permits are the permanent permits issued for limited fisheries. Limited entry permits must be renewed annually and most can be transferred to another person after initial issuance. Interim-use permits are issued annually for all commercial fisheries which are not under entry limitation, and to applicants waiting to find out if they qualify for permanent permits. Vessel permits are issued annually to vessels qualified to participate in the Bering Sea hair crab fishery.



Can the permit holder use the permit on any boat?

In most fisheries the permit holder may fish the permit on any licensed vessel, but ADFG regulations for the specific fishery should be consulted.

On the permit application the ADFG number of the vessel to be fished must be provided, and in order for the permit card to be issued the vessel must be licensed.

What agency issues vessel licenses?

Licenses for commercial fishing vessels are issued by the Commission. Once licensed, the vessel may be used in any commercial fishery, provided it is in compliance with applicable ADFG regulations.

Don't some permits cost thousands of dollars?

In order to enter a fishery which is under limited entry, a permit must be obtained by transfer from a current permit holder. Many of these transfers involve sales, and the prices can fluctuate anywhere from \$2,000 to approximately \$450,000. These prices are determined on the free market and are not set by the Commission.

Do you have to fish a limited entry permit every year in order to keep it?

Limited entry permits do not have to be fished every year, however, the renewal fee must be paid each year in order to keep the permit valid. If the fishery is closed by ADFG for the entire year and area, the Commission will waive the permit fees. If renewal fees are not paid for two years, the permit will be forfeited to the State of Alaska. Interim-use permits do not have to be renewed each year because they are issued only on an annual basis to applicants who actually intend to participate in the fishery during the year.

What happens to permits that are forfeited because the renewal fees are not paid?

Forfeited permits are removed from the fisheries and are kept by the State of Alaska. The permit holder may request reinstatement by completing the *Application to Reinstate Commercial Fishing Permit* form. The fisherman must demonstrate good cause for the reinstatement of the permit and pay all back year fees including the current year fees.