

# Shellfish Harvester Regulations Fact Sheet

## Harvesting

### The Virginia Department of Health Division of Shellfish Sanitation (VDH/DSS)

classifies and monitors shellfish harvest areas based on levels of pollution.

**Approved areas** are growing areas where harvest for direct marketing is allowed.

**Condemned areas** are areas where harvesting is allowed with certain restrictions.

To know whether harvesting areas are approved or condemned go to <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/EnvironmentalHealth/Shellfish/index.htm>

### The Virginia Marine Resources Commission (VMRC)

has a mobile map which will allow you to check the shellfish closure status to a specific lease by going to <https://webapps.mrc.virginia.gov/public/maps/condemnation.html>

## Tags

Harvested shellfish must be tagged with required information. **The 4 W's** on Shellstock Tags provides us with **WHO** harvested the product, **WHEN** it was harvested, **WHERE** it was harvested, and **WHAT** type of shellfish was harvested.

The information on this tag follows the shellfish from harvest to the final consumer.

**Follow harvest and seasonal time tables** for the harvest of oysters and clams. No harvest is allowed before sunrise from June 15 through August 31.

## Handling

### Harvesting Boat

The boat must be registered with the state;

Be properly constructed;

Have an available sanitation device;

Shading provided to protect the shellfish; and

Have USCG approved equipment.

### Discharge of human waste

overboard is not allowed since it can lead to contamination of the shellfish in the harvest area resulting in closures.

### Proper culling techniques

should be used to assure shellfish are available to future harvesters.

### Daily harvest time

Restrictions on oysters (VMRC)

**Oysters must be harvested, offloaded and landed by the curfew times listed below in order to limit Vibrio bacteria growth.**

Oct - April	sunrise to	sunset
May	11 am	
June 1-Aug 31	10 am	
Sept	12 noon	

**Harvest times** can be extended from **May through September** as long as the harvester is using an approved method of harvest such as the use of ice or a GPS tracking device and a permit has been granted.

## Transportation

**Delivering shellfish directly to certified dealers** facility using mechanical refrigeration (at 45°F or less) or ice when transport times exceed 1 hour and providing shade ensures a protected product.

**No shellfish should be exposed** to gasoline, garbage, animals, etc.

### For Harvester Activities related to:

Water classification/monitoring  
Plant processing inspection  
Vessel certification

Call your VDH, Division of Shellfish Sanitation Office



#### VDH/DSS

Central Office 804 864 7480

#### Field Offices:

Accomac 757 787 5864 x221

Norfolk 757 683 8461

White Stone 804 435 1095

### For harvesters activities related to:

Boater safety regulations  
Bag/ size limits  
Seasonal time limits  
Vessel Sanitation Device  
Training

**Call Virginia Marine Resources Commission (VMRC)**

**(757) 247-2200**

