

Information About Relaying and Receiving of Shellfish

SHELLMAP REGULATORY SERVICES

Hazards:

- Microbial, chemical and biotoxin contamination of shellfish when harvested from closed, restricted or unclassified growing areas.
- Cross-contamination of shellfish in receiving growing areas.
- Ineffective purging in receiving waters.

Control Measures:

- Appropriate relay plans approved by ShellMAP Regulatory Services.

Bivalve shellfish such as oysters, mussels, clams and scallops are viewed as seafood delicacies.

However, the consumption of such shellfish may pose a public health risk, particularly when they are eaten raw or only lightly cooked.

In the absence of proper food safety controls for shellfish harvesting and processing, the risk of illness and death linked to shellfish consumption is significant.

Due to poor or unknown bacteriological quality, the *Primary Produce Safety Act 2011* prohibits the taking of shellfish from the following areas:

- Unclassified growing areas
- Areas classified by ShellMAP Regulatory Services as Restricted
- Approved areas that are temporarily closed for harvesting.

However, shellfish taken from the above areas may be 'cleansed'. This is done by pumping clean water (feeding) and flushing contaminants out naturally over a period of time.

What is relaying?

Relaying is the movement of shellfish from areas where harvest is not permitted into a shellfish growing area classified as Approved or Conditionally Approved.

What are the risks?

The relaying of shellfish is regulated due to the risks involved. These include:

- Cross-contamination of shellfish in the receiving waters
- Mistaken harvest of recently relayed shellfish
- Inability of relayed shellfish to effectively pump clean water and flush out contaminants caused by overcrowding of relayed shellfish
- Inappropriate time periods for cleansing.

Some of these risks exist for juvenile shellfish and advice should be sought from ShellMAP Regulatory Services as to the need for permits when relocating juveniles.

Relay Periods

Relayed shellfish must be left in the receiving area for the time periods specified in the table below before they are harvested. This gives the relayed shellfish time to naturally depurate (cleanse) themselves of any contaminants. However, the time period will vary according to the location and the environmental conditions.

Relaying From	Permit Required From ShellMAP Regulatory Services	Minimum Holding Period Post Relay
Unclassified Areas (under certain conditions)	Yes	60 days
Restricted Areas	Yes	14 days
Conditionally Approved or Approved Areas in closed status	Yes	14 days
Any permitted harvest area closed due to sewage contamination	Yes	21 days
Any permitted harvest area closed due to biotoxins	Yes	60 days (14 days with testing*)
Conditionally Approved or Approved Areas in open status.	No	0 Days**

*Relayed stock holding times. *14 day minimum holding period for relays from areas closed due to biotoxins requires two biotoxin results seven days apart to be within limits set out in the Biotoxin Management Plan. ** Must comply with any minimum holding requirements detailed in receiver's relevant Food Safety Plan.*

Relaying is not permitted from prohibited areas.

Relayed shellfish should be placed in lots, in a separate area of the farm so they do not contaminate stock already on the farm. The relayed lots need to be clearly identified so there is no possibility of harvesting them before the cleansing period is completed.

As environmental conditions such as water temperature and salinity can affect the ability of the shellfish to naturally cleanse, ShellMAP Regulatory Services may require farmers to regularly monitor the environment. Such conditions will be advised in writing to the operator.

Records to be kept for relaying

Any business that relays shellfish must keep adequate records. This ensures that all shellfish can be traced

back to their original growing area, and their time in the destination harvest area is recorded.

The above records must be available for inspection on request by an officer authorised under the *Primary Produce Safety Act 2011* or *Living Marine Resources Act 1995*.

For more information please call:

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