



## FMA Debriefing and Quality Control

The success of the Fisheries Monitoring and Analysis Division's observer program depends on the quality of data collected by observers. The data submitted provides information critical for fisheries management in Alaska - as well as providing insight into the entire ecosystem. The importance of these data requires that observers follow FMA's sampling guidelines and methods for data collection. To ensure methods are consistent with our training, and the data collected are sound, FMA requires observers to complete a debriefing process after each cruise.



The debriefing process consists of the following elements:

- Observers complete a vessel or processing plant report for each assignment. This report provides details on the observed fishery, the vessel or plant configuration and the sampling procedures used by the observer.
- A debriefing interview is conducted by a staff member. The debriefer and the observer discuss sampling decisions made by the observer, any problems and resolutions that occurred during the observer's deployment and recommendations for future sampling.
- A thorough data check is conducted by the debriefer. Observers check and re-check their data at sea to ensure quality data for inseason fishery management. Nonetheless, small errors are to be expected, especially during long cruises. The debriefer and observer fix any identified errors prior to the data being loaded on to the FMA's final database.
- Finally, the observer completes a post-debriefing questionnaire. The questionnaire is anonymous and provides observers the opportunity to comment on, and suggest changes to, the FMA Division and the services we provide.



At the end of each debriefing, observers receive an evaluation of their work and performance. This evaluation includes a list of specific assessed points covering a variety of aspects pertinent to their overall deployment, as well as comments addressing overall effort in completing duties, level of documentation of activities, and any issues of note they encountered during their debriefing. The evaluation will also include a recommendation for their next briefing requirement.

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