

**SUPPORTING STATEMENT**  
**U.S. Department of Commerce**  
**National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration**  
**Alaska Region Permit Family of Forms**  
**OMB Control No. 0648-0206**

**Abstract**

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Alaska Region requests extension of this currently approved information collection that contains requirements for obtaining a Federal Fisheries Permit (FFP), a Federal Processing Permit (FPP), and an Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP). There are no changes or revisions to this collection.

An FFP is required for U.S. vessels used to fish for groundfish in the Gulf of Alaska or Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands. An FFP is also required for vessels used to fish for any non-groundfish species and are required to retain any bycatch of groundfish. An FFP is required for stationary floating processors (processing vessels that operate solely within Alaska State waters) and for shoreside processors that receive and/or process groundfish harvested from Federal waters (or from any federally permitted vessels).

An EFP is issued by the Alaska Region to allow fishing activities that would otherwise be prohibited under Federal regulations. EFPs are issued for limited experimental purposes to support projects that could benefit fisheries and the environment. Information collected as part of an EFP is used to inform future fishery management decisions and guide future EFPs.

The Magnuson-Stevens Act specifically recognizes the need for permit issuance. Permit issuance is essential in fishery resources management for identification of the participants and expected activity levels and for regulatory compliance. In addition, EFPs are an essential mechanism in which to enhance the efficacy and safety and minimize the impact in harvesting fishery resources. This collection allows for continued efficient, science based, and minimal impact harvesting of Alaska fishery resources.

**Justification**

**1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary. Identify any legal or administrative requirements that necessitate the collection. Attach a copy of the appropriate section of each statute and regulation mandating or authorizing the collection of information.**

Under the [Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act](#) 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.* (Magnuson-Stevens Act), the Secretary of Commerce is responsible for the conservation and management of marine fishery resources within the EEZ of the United States (U.S.) through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration/National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA/NMFS). NMFS Alaska Region manages the groundfish fisheries in the EEZ of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area (BSAI) and Gulf of Alaska (GOA) under the

Fishery Management Plan for Groundfish of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area and the Fishery Management Plan for Groundfish of the Gulf of Alaska, respectively. The Council developed the fishery management plans (FMPs). Regulations implementing the FMPs appear at [50 CFR part 679](#).

Section 303(b)(1) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act specifically recognizes the need for permit issuance. Requiring a permit for marine resource users is one of the regulatory steps taken to carry out conservation and management objectives. Permit issuance is essential in fishery resources management and necessary for identification of participants and expected activity levels and for regulatory compliance (e.g., withholding of permit issuance pending collection of unpaid penalties).

This collection includes the information requirements for the following permits:

Form Name	Located in Regulations at 50 CFR part:
Federal Fisheries Permit (FFP)	679.4(b)
Federal Processor Permit (FPP)	679.4(f)
Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP)	600.745(b) and 679.6

**2. Indicate how, by whom, and for what purpose the information is to be used. Except for a new collection, indicate the actual use the agency has made of the information received from the current collection.**

No changes have been made to this information collection since the last renewal.

The information collection is designed to yield data that meet all applicable information quality guidelines. Prior to dissemination, the information will be subjected to quality control measures and a pre-dissemination review pursuant to [Section 515 of Public Law 106-554](#) Section 515 of Public Law 106-554 (the Information Quality Act), which requires NMFS to ensure the quality, objectivity, utility, and integrity of information it publicly disseminates. Public dissemination of data collected by this information collection is governed by [NOAA's information quality guidelines](#), which were issued on October 30, 2014.

It is anticipated that the information collected will be disseminated to the public or used to support publicly disseminated information. NMFS will retain control over the information and safeguard it from improper access, modification, and destruction, consistent with NOAA standards for confidentiality, privacy, and electronic information. See response to Question 10 of this Supporting Statement for more information on confidentiality and privacy.

**a. Application for Federal Fisheries Permit (FFP)**

FFPs are non-transferable, 3-year permits, issued on request and without charge to vessel owners. These permits are authorized at 50 CFR 679.4(b). An FFP is required for U.S. vessels used to fish for groundfish in the GOA and BSAI. The FFP is also required for vessels that must retain any bycatch of groundfish under 50 CFR part 679.

In addition, if the owner of a vessel plans to participate in the directed fisheries for Pacific cod, pollock, and/or Atka mackerel in the GOA or BSAI with any gear other than jig gear, the FFP must be endorsed for these species by gear type used. Vessels endorsed for these directed fisheries in the EEZ off Alaska are required to have on board an active Vessel Monitoring System (see OMB Control No. 0648-0445) while the directed fisheries for which the permit is endorsed are open, regardless of where the vessel is fishing at the time (including Alaska State waters) or what the vessel is targeting.

Only persons who are U.S. citizens are authorized to receive or hold an FFP.

The FFP application is used to request a new or amended permit, to renew a permit, or to surrender a permit. The application is available on the NMFS Alaska Region website and may be submitted to NMFS by mail, courier, or fax.

If ownership in Block A of the application has changed or if this is an application for a vessel to which an FFP has never been issued, documentation of vessel ownership must be provided with this application. To demonstrate vessel ownership you must provide the following:

- ◆ For U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) documented vessels, a copy of the USCG Abstract of Title or Certificate of Documentation
- ◆ For undocumented vessels, a copy of the State of Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G) vessel license or registration

The information collected on an FFP application includes the type of request (new, renewal, amendment, or surrender) and a current FFP number if renewing, amending, or surrendering an existing FFP. An FFP application has five sections, Blocks A through E that collect information about the applicant, business details, vessel specifications and permit numbers, the species endorsements that are requested, and a signature of the applicant.

The information requested on the permit application is used for fisheries management and regulatory compliance by NMFS Sustainable Fisheries Division, NMFS Restricted Access Management Program, NMFS Observer Program, NOAA Office of Law Enforcement, the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), and the Council.

**b. Application for Federal Processor Permit (FPP)**

FPPs are non-transferable, 1-year permits, issued to owners on request and without charge. These permits are authorized at 50 CFR 679.4(f). An FPP is required for stationary floating processors

(processing vessels that operate solely within Alaska State waters) and for shoreside processors that receive and/or process groundfish harvested from Federal waters (or from any federally permitted vessels). An FPP is required before the manager of a shoreside processor, stationary floating processor (SFP), or a community quota entity (CQE) floating processor may receive, process, purchase, or arrange to purchase unprocessed groundfish harvested in the GOA or BSAI (see 50 CFR 679.4(f)).

Only persons who are U.S. citizens are authorized to receive or hold an FPP.

A shoreside processor, SFP, or CQE floating processor that is issued an FPP under 50 CFR 679.4(f) must use eLandings (see OMB Control No. 0648-0515) or other NMFS-approved software to daily record and report groundfish harvest. For more information on eLandings, see <https://elandings.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/doc/pages/79659055/eLandings+Reporting+System+FAQ+s>.

Persons holding an FPP may be required to pay an ex-vessel value-based observer fee to NMFS to support the funding and development of observers on vessels and in plants in the partial coverage category under the North Pacific Observer Program (see OMB Control No. 0648-0711; 50 CFR 679.55). This fee is intended to be split evenly between the vessel owner and the processor or registered buyer. However, the owner of a shoreside processor or SFP named on an FPP and the registered buyer are responsible for collecting the fee, including the vessel's portion, at the time of landing and remitting the full fee amount to NMFS. Additional information on the observer fee is available on the NMFS Alaska Region website at <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/alaska/commercial-fishing/observer-fee-collection-and-payment-north-pacific-groundfish-and-halibut>.

An FPP permit holder who has incurred an observer fee must pay the fee to NMFS by February 15 of the year following the calendar year in which the landing was made. For an FPP application to be considered complete, all observer fees due to NMFS per § 679.55 must be paid.

The owner or authorized representative of the shoreside processor, SFP, or CQE floating processor must complete an FFP application to obtain, amend, renew, or surrender an FPP. The FPP application is available on the NMFS Alaska Region website and may be submitted to NMFS by mail, courier, or fax.

For an SFP, a GOA inshore processing endorsement is required to process GOA inshore pollock and Eastern GOA inshore Pacific cod. An SFP that wishes to receive GOA inshore processing endorsements must complete number 11 of Block B on the FPP application. An SFP that holds an inshore processing endorsement is prohibited from processing GOA pollock and GOA Pacific cod in more than one single geographic location during a fishing year and is also prohibited from operating as a catcher/processor in the BSAI. Vessels holding the GOA inshore processing endorsement face additional operating restrictions (see 50 CFR 679.7). Once issued, a GOA inshore processing endorsement cannot be rescinded for the duration of a fishing year. It may be changed for the next fishing year by submitting an FPP application to amend the permit prior to the beginning of that fishing year.

The information collected on an FPP application includes the processor category the application is for and whether the request is new, a renewal, an amendment or a surrender. If requesting to renew, amend, or surrender an existing FPP, an FPP number must be provided. An FPP application has four sections, Blocks A through D, that collect information on the shoreside processor, SFP or CEQ information, ownership information of the shoreside processor or vessel, the applicant's signature, and attachment of the USCG Abstract of Title or Certificate of Documentation if requesting a new FPP or if changing the ownership.

The information requested on the permit application is used for fisheries management and regulatory compliance by NMFS Sustainable Fisheries Division, NMFS Restricted Access Management Program, NMFS Observer Program, NOAA Office of Law Enforcement, the USCG, and the Council.

**c. Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) application**

NMFS issues an [EFP](#) to allow groundfish fishing activities that would otherwise be prohibited under regulations for groundfish fishing. EFPs are issued to support projects that could benefit the groundfish fisheries and the environment and result in gathering information not otherwise available through research or commercial fishing operations. EFPs allow for science based, monitored research on new ways to harvest resources. Examples of past projects supported by EFPs include the development of new gear types for an underutilized fishery and development of devices that reduce prohibited species bycatch. NMFS Alaska Region, NMFS Alaska Fisheries Science Center, and the Council all use information collected as part of EFPs to inform future fishery management decisions and guide future EFPs.

For limited experimental purposes, the Regional Administrator may authorize, after consulting with the Council, fishing for groundfish or fishing for Arctic fish in the Arctic Management Area in a manner that would otherwise be prohibited. No exempted fishing may be conducted unless authorized by an EFP issued by the Regional Administrator to the participating vessel owner in accordance with the criteria and procedures.

EFPs are issued without charge and expire at the end of a calendar year unless otherwise provided. This expiration requirement is necessary to avoid situations where information obtained from the fishing experiments might not be made available for several years, thereby denying the fishing industry information obtained from the experiment. The process to issue an EFP takes 6 to 12 months depending on the complexity of the project and the Council's meeting schedule.

No application form exists for this application; however, NMFS has a suggested EFP design. The applicant need not be the owner or operator of the vessel(s). The EFP design must—

- ◆ be approved by the Alaska Fisheries Science Center;
- ◆ be presented at a Council meeting; and

- ◆ must include observers, if required by the Regional Administrator, and a description of accommodations and work space for the observer(s).

For each EFP application, NMFS—

- ◆ may write an environmental analysis to determine the impacts of the EFP prior to awarding the permit. This analysis would support the decision-making and inform the public of the effects of the EFP project.
- ◆ must consult with the Council. This includes filing a *Federal Register* notice announcing receipt of the EFP application and notifying the public of which meeting NMFS will consult with the Council on the application.
- ◆ upon deciding to issue the EFP, develops the EFP. The EFP includes project-specific terms and conditions that must be met for the permit holder to be exempted from the stated regulations, and the timing, area, and vessel(s) to which the EFP applies.
- ◆ disseminates EFP project data and results when available. Through the release of information from NMFS and the EFP participants, other interested parties in the fishing industry could make use of information obtained and not duplicate efforts already expended by those who initially received an EFP.

An EFP application includes information on the applicant, a description of the project design including how it will vary from current fishing regulations, the species affected and targeted, when and where the fishing will take place, the vessel that will be used, a provision for public release of all obtained information, and a signature of the applicant(s).

An EFP application may be submitted to NMFS by mail, email, or fax. Since the 2015 renewal/revision of this collection, none have been submitted by mail or courier; all have been sent electronically and we expect this to continue.

**3. Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology, e.g. permitting electronic submission of responses, and the basis for the decision for adopting this means of collection. Also, describe any consideration of using information technology to reduce burden.**

The FFP and FPP applications are available [here](#) on the NMFS Alaska Region website. The applications may be completed online using the fillable PDF forms and then printed and faxed to the NMFS Alaska Region permits office. The FPP application may be renewed online through the eFISH program. The NMFS permits office is working towards making all of the permit applications available through eFISH.

[eFISH](#) is the NMFS Alaska Region online Fisheries Information System. eFISH provides an online method to submit applications and access to participants' NMFS permit accounts. Permit

holders access eFISH through a User ID and password issued by NMFS. Instructions for using eFISH are posted on the NMFS Alaska Region website at <https://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/node/30749>.

Example EFP applications may be found [here](#) on the NMFS Alaska Region Website. Information on submitting an EFP may be found [here](#) on the NMFS Alaska Region Website. EFP applications may be submitted to NMFS Alaska Region Sustainable Fishery staff by email or fax.

**4. Describe efforts to identify duplication. Show specifically why any similar information already available cannot be used or modified for use for the purposes described in Question 2.**

None of the information collected as part of this information collection duplicates other collections. Section 303(b)(1) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act specifically recognizes the need for permit issuance, and there are no alternate means or methods to perform the functions laid out in this supporting statement.

**5. If the collection of information impacts small businesses or other small entities, describe any methods used to minimize burden.**

The information collection affects small entities. NMFS attempts to minimize the burden of this collection on all respondents.

The FFP and FPP applications are available online as fillable pdfs and may be submitted by fax. The FFP has a 3-year renewal cycle, so participants are not required to submit an application every year. The EFP does not have an application form, and example applications are provided on the [NMFS EFP webpage](#). The required information for the EFP may be submitted by email or fax. For help or more information on the FFP, FPP, or EFP, persons may contact NMFS staff through email and toll-free phone numbers.

**6. Describe the consequence to Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently, as well as any technical or legal obstacles to reducing burden.**

The permit system is an integral part of the management of groundfish fisheries in the Alaska Region. It would not be possible to carry out the mandates of the Magnuson-Stevens Act and other laws if approval to continue these previously approved collections were to be denied. The yearly application for the FPP ensures that all participants are up to date in payment of their observer fees, which in turn ensures a high quality of data into NMFS's catch accounting systems, which ultimately feeds into future stock assessments. EFP applications are only required if fishing will deviate from normal activities. An EFP may be issued for any justified length of time, but are usually issued for one year, with the option to renew with the foundation

of the existing application. It is necessary to review and renew EFP applications for the time length specified in the original permit in order to monitor the effects of new fishing activities on a fishery and to meet the requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Act.

**7. Explain any special circumstances that would cause an information collection to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with OMB guidelines.**

This collection will be conducted in a manner consistent with OMB guidelines.

**8. If applicable, provide a copy and identify the date and page number of publications in the Federal Register of the agency's notice, required by 5 CFR 1320.8 (d), soliciting comments on the information collection prior to submission to OMB. Summarize public comments received in response to that notice and describe actions taken by the agency in response to these comments. Specifically address comments received on cost and hour burden.**

Public comment was solicited in a [Federal Register](#) notice (85 FR 76536) published on November 30, 2020. In addition, NMFS solicited input from permit holders to obtain their views on the availability of data, frequency of collection, the clarity of instructions and recordkeeping, disclosure, or reporting format (if any), and on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported.. No comments were received.

**9. Explain any decision to provide any payment or gift to respondents, other than remuneration of contractors or grantees.**

No payment or gift is provided.

**10. Describe any assurance of confidentiality provided to respondents and the basis for the assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy. If the collection requires a systems of records notice (SORN) or privacy impact assessment (PIA), those should be cited and described here.**

All information collections by NMFS Alaska Region are protected under confidentiality provisions of section 402(b) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act as amended in 2006 (16 U.S.C. 1801, *et seq.*) and under NOAA Administrative Order 216-100, which sets forth procedures to protect confidentiality of fishery statistics.

The System of Records Notices (SORNs) that cover this information collection is [COMMERCE/NOAA-19, Permits and Registrations for United States Federally Regulated Fisheries](#). An amended Privacy Act SORN for COMMERCE/NOAA-19 was published in the *Federal Register* on August 7, 2015 (80 FR 47457), and became effective September 15, 2015 (80 FR 55327).

The Privacy Impact Assessment that covers this information collection is [NOAA NMFS Alaska Region Local Area Network \(NOAA4700\)](#).



**11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior or attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private. This justification should include the reasons why the agency considers the questions necessary, the specific uses to be made of the information, the explanation to be given to persons from whom the information is requested, and any steps to be taken to obtain their consent.**

This information collection does not involve information of a sensitive nature.

**12. Provide estimates of the hour burden of the collection of information.**

Information Collection	Type of Respondent (e.g., Occupational Title)	# of Respondents/ year (a)	Annual # of Responses / Respondent (b)	Total # of Annual Responses (c) = (a) x (b)	Burden Hrs / Response <sup>2/</sup> (d)	Total Annual Burden Hrs (e) = (c) x (d)	Hourly Wage Rate (for Type of Respondent) (f)	Total Annual Wage Burden Costs (g) = (e) x (f)
Application for Federal Fisheries Permit (FFP)	Fisherman	402 <sup>1/</sup>	1	402	21 min	141	\$23.46 <sup>3/</sup>	\$3,308
Application for Federal Processor Permit (FPP)	Fisherman	79	1	79	25 min	33	\$23.46 <sup>3/</sup>	\$774
Exempted Fisheries Permit application	Industry Representative	3 <sup>4/</sup>	1	3	100 hr	300	\$100.00 <sup>5/</sup>	\$30,000
<b>Totals</b>				<b>484</b>		<b>474 hrs</b>		<b>\$34,082</b>

<sup>1/</sup> FFP applications are on a 3-year renewal cycle. There are a total of 1,205 FFP holders, with an average of 402 (i.e., 1/3) of participants filing for a renewal each year.

<sup>2/</sup> Burden hours applied from previous renewal.

<sup>3/</sup> Occupation Code 45-0000 (Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations), Sector 11 (Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting). [May 2019 Occupational Employment Statistics Research Estimates, Alaska.](#)

<sup>4/</sup> Three EFPs were submitted in 2020, and NMFS estimates this number annually during this renewal period.

<sup>5/</sup> The hourly wage rate for EFP Industry Representatives is based on comments received during the 2018 renewal.

**13. Provide an estimate for the total annual cost burden to respondents or record keepers resulting from the collection of information. (Do not include the cost of any hour burden already reflected on the burden worksheet).**

Information Collection	# of Respondents/ year (a)	Annual # of Responses / Respondent (b)	Total # of Annual Responses (c) = (a) x (b)	Cost Burden / Respondent <sup>1/</sup> (h)	Total Annual Cost Burden (i) = (c) x (h)
Application for Federal Fisheries Permit (FFP)	402	1	402	Operating costs - \$5	\$2,010
Application for Federal Processor Permit (FPP)	79	1	79	Operating costs - \$5	\$395
Exempted Fishing Permit application	3	1	3	Operating costs - \$5	\$15
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>484</b>		<b>484</b>		<b>\$2,420</b>

<sup>1/</sup> Operating costs account for the typical inclusive general office services packages that include expenses for email, fax, copying, mailing, printing, and internet.

**14. Provide estimates of annualized cost to the Federal government. Also, provide a description of the method used to estimate cost, which should include quantification of hours, operational expenses (such as equipment, overhead, printing, and support staff), and any other expense that would not have been incurred without this collection of information.**

Cost Descriptions	Grade/Step	Loaded Salary <sup>1/</sup> /Cost	% of Effort	Fringe (if Applicable)	Total Cost to Government
<b>Federal Oversight</b>					
EFP Application Processing	GS 11, Step 1	\$108,806	10%		\$10,881
EFP Application Processing	GS 11, Step 1	\$128,236	10%		\$12,824
EFP Application Processing	GS 11, Step 2	\$137,733	10%		\$13,773
EFP Application Processing	GS 13, Step 1	\$185,953	10%		\$18,595
EFP Application Processing	GS 13, Step 1	\$170,539	10%		\$17,054
FPP and FPP Application Processing	(x3) GS 10, Step 1	\$99,034	11%		\$32,681
<b>Contractor Cost</b>					NA
<b>Travel</b>					NA
<b>Other Costs:</b>					NA
<b>TOTAL</b>					<b>\$105,808</b>

<sup>1/</sup> For loaded salary, 52% is added to base pay.

**15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments reported in ROCIS.**

The adjustments reflect recent participation in the fisheries that require an FFP and FPP, and general interest in modifying fishery practices through an EFP.

Information Collection	Respondents		Responses		Burden Hours		Reason for change or adjustment
	Current Renewal / Revision	Previous Renewal / Revision	Current Renewal / Revision	Previous Renewal / Revision	Current Renewal / Revision	Previous Renewal / Revision	
Application for Federal Fisheries Permit	402	441	402	441	141	154	Decrease in the number of applications submitted
Application for Federal Processor Permit	79	86	79	86	33	36	Decrease in the number of applications submitted
Exempted Fishing Permit application	3	4	3	4	300	400	Decrease in the number of applications submitted
<b>Total for Collection</b>	<b>484</b>	<b>531</b>	<b>484</b>	<b>531</b>	<b>474</b>	<b>590</b>	
<b>Difference</b>		-47		-47		-116	

Information Collection	Labor Costs		Miscellaneous Costs		Reason for change or adjustment
	Current	Previous	Current	Previous	
Application for Federal Fisheries Permit	\$3,308	\$5,698	\$2,010	\$304	Labor costs: Is now based on BLS hourly wage rate Misc. Costs: Revised amount to account for typical inclusive general office services packages.
Application for Federal Processor Permit	\$774	\$1,332	\$395	\$136	Labor costs: Is now based on BLS hourly wage rate; Misc. Costs: Revised amount to account for typical inclusive general office services packages.
Exempted Fishing Permit application	\$30,000	\$40,000	\$15	\$0	Misc. Costs: Revised amount to account for typical inclusive general office services packages.
<b>Total for Collection</b>	<b>\$34,082</b>	<b>\$47,030</b>	<b>\$2,420</b>	<b>\$440</b>	
<b>Difference</b>		-\$12,948		\$1,980	

**16. For collections of information whose results will be published, outline plans for tabulation and publication. Address any complex analytical techniques that will be used. Provide the time schedule for the entire project, including beginning and ending dates of the collection of information, completion of report, publication dates, and other actions.**

The list of FFPs and FPPs and the information obtained from the permit applications are publically posted on the NMFS Alaska Region website [here](#). EFP applications, comments on the applications, and final reports resulting from issuance of EFPs are publically posted on the NMFS Alaska Region website [here](#). FFP and FPP permits are available from 2005 and on, and EFP applications from 2003 and on.

**17. If seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection, explain the reasons that display would be inappropriate.**

There is no form for an EFP. The agency will display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection on the FFP and FPP application forms.

**18. Explain each exception to the certification statement identified in “Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions.”**

The agency certifies compliance with [5 CFR 1320.9](#) and the related provisions of [5 CFR 1320.8\(b\)\(3\)](#).