

HANDGEAR A PERMIT INFORMATION SHEET



NOAA FISHERIES SERVICE

This summary provides a broad overview of restrictions and requirements; the regulations summarized here may be found at 50 CFR part 648. Please contact the Sustainable Fisheries Division at (978) 281-9315 for more information.



The Sustainable Fisheries Division provides stewardship of living marine resources through science-based conservation and management and the promotion of healthy marine ecosystems.

What is a Handgear A permit?

- A Handgear A (HA) permit is a limited access Northeast multispecies permit that allows vessels to target groundfish using handgear.

What are the gear requirements?

- You can only have handgear onboard the vessel (rod/reel, tub trawl). You must haul all gear by hand and are not allowed to use an automatic jigger, electric reels, hydraulics, or any other source of power. You are allowed an absolute maximum of 250 hooks, 12/0 minimum size.

What area closures apply to this permit?

- Please refer to the Closed Area Information Sheet on our website at <http://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/regs/infodocs/multsclosedareas.pdf>
- As of May 1, 2017, HA vessels are not required to take the March spawning block out of the fishery.

What are the reporting requirements?

- Vessels fishing in a single broad stock area (e.g., Gulf of Maine, Inshore Georges Bank) on a trip must declare the trip through the interactive voice response (IVR) system or through a Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) unit.
 - For online access to IVR, log in to Fish Online and click the 'IVR Reporting' link on the left side menu. Fish Online can be found at www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/apps.
 - The phone number for the IVR system is **1-888-284-4904**
 - If you cannot access the IVR after normal business hours to declare your trip, call the back-up IVR message line at **1-888-487-9994** and leave your name, call-back phone number, vessel name and Federal fisheries permit number, and sailing or landing date and time. A technician will enter your information in the IVR database and return your call during normal business hours.
 - For IVR PINs or questions about the IVR system during business hours, call the Analysis and Program Support Division at **978-281-9188**.
- Vessels fishing in more than one broad stock area on a trip need to declare their trip through a VMS unit. Vessels that declare their intent to fish inside and outside of the Gulf of Maine on the same trip are required to submit daily VMS catch reports.
- Sectors may request an exemption for participating HA vessels from the requirement to declare sector trips through a VMS unit.
- You must submit a vessel trip report (VTR) for all trips, even if it is not a groundfish trip (e.g., lobster).
- In addition, by holding a groundfish permit, you are required to report weekly. As of August 26, 2015, you are **not** required to submit a "Did Not Fish" VTR for weeks that you do not fish.

How do I start and end trips in IVR?

- The IVR system will ask you a series of questions. After each answer, it will ask you to confirm your response.

Trip start

1. Report start of a trip
2. Permit number
3. PIN number
4. Say your name and operator number
5. Report sailing
6. Report Fishery
7. Gear
8. Sector (yes or no)
9. Broad Stock Area (BSA)
10. Another BSA (yes or no)
11. VTR number
12. Port Code – call (978)281-9149 if you need your port code
13. Phone number – including area code
14. Record confirmation number

Trip End

1. Report stop of trip
2. Permit number
3. PIN number
4. Phone number - including area code
5. Open trip? Press 2 to land
6. Port code
7. Trip start and end date/time
8. Record confirmation number

What are the cod possession limits?

- The Gulf of Maine (GOM) and Georges Bank (GB) cod trip limits are set annually, and mid-year adjustments can be made to either or both stocks; we will notify you of any trip limit adjustments. For current groundfish possession limits, please see the Landings/Possessions and Size Limits information sheet at <https://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/regs/infodocs/multipossessionlimitsnarrow.html>

How will the cod possession limits be adjusted?

- If the GOM or GB cod trip limit for common pool days-at-sea (DAS) vessels is reduced below 300 lb per DAS, then the Handgear A cod trip limit will be reduced to equal the reduced limit for DAS vessels.

What are the possession limits of other species (e.g., haddock, pollock)?

- You are subject to the same possession limits as DAS vessels for all other regulated species

This information sheet was last updated on March 20, 2019