

SHELLFISH GENERAL - Seafood Dealer Declaration Requirement

What is being considered?

There is currently a requirement that seafood dealers declare their intent to purchase shellfish intended for human consumption (soft-shell clams of the species *Mya arenaria*, hard-shell clams, and oysters) prior to engaging in that activity. The Department would like to modify the requirement to include harvesters who sell their own catch, who are also licensed by the Maryland Department of Health.

Why is this change necessary?

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) recently created a requirement for shellfish dealers to declare their intention to deal in shellfish if they plan to purchase soft-shell clams of the species *Mya arenaria*, hard-shell clams, and oysters. Part of that declaration process requires the dealer to provide the Department with the dealer's certification number from the Maryland Department of Health (MDH). The purpose of this requirement is to better align the ability of the MDNR and MDH to coordinate and track the purchase and transport of shellfish intended for human consumption, thereby ensuring public health. However, some harvesters who are MDNR-licensed and MDH-certified dealers sell their own catch directly to the public. The most important transaction regarding shellfish for MDNR to be aware of is the initial transaction. This may be between the harvester and the dealer, or between the harvester and the public, if the harvester is also a MDNR-licensed, MDH-certified dealer. Covering the initial transaction ensures that shellfish intended for human consumption comes from licensed harvesters, is tagged properly, and has complied with time and temperature requirements. Additionally, it ensures that buy tickets are properly filled out to ensure that the required taxes are paid for the replenishment of the State's shellfish resources, and harvest information is recorded to track the origin of the shellfish. Including MDNR-licensed, MDH-certified harvesters who sell their own catch to the public will ensure the public health and resource management benefits necessary for the management of these fisheries.

Who will this affect?

MDNR-licensed, MDH-certified shellfish harvesters who sell their own catch.

When would this be effective?

The Department projects that this change could be effective for the start of the license renewal period in 2026. However, the exact date cannot be determined. The Department will follow our normal [procedures](#) if this concept moves forward.

Has this change been discussed with advisory bodies or other interested individuals?

Scoped with the Sport Fisheries Advisory Commission (SFAC) and Tidal Fisheries Advisory Commission (TFAC) at their meetings in October 2025.