

## Eastern Sea Fisheries Joint Committee

### Code of Conduct for Inspections



Eastern Sea Fisheries Joint Committee employs Fishery Officers to carry out inspections of marine organisms, British fishing vessels, fishing equipment and vehicles to monitor compliance with EU, UK and local fisheries and environmental legislation. Fishery Officers hold Warrants giving them the powers to act within the counties of Lincolnshire, Norfolk and Suffolk and to operate out to 6nm from the coastline. Some Fishery Officers also hold Limited British Sea Fisheries Fishery Officers and Environment Agency Salmon & Fresh Water Fishery Act Warrants. ESFJC pledges to conduct all inspections in a courteous, fair and professional manner. Fishery Officers do not always wear a uniform, however they will display their official identification to you.

#### **Boarding vessels**

Fishery Officers will identify themselves prior to boarding and will operate from vessels clearly marked as fishery protection vessels. It is expected that Masters of vessels maintain a proper VHF watch on channel 16 and respond appropriately when hailed. Masters of a vessel will be asked to facilitate a safe boarding by Fishery Officers, this may include requests to slow down, offer a lee or haul gear in addition to providing a suitable boarding ladder in compliance with the relevant legislation. Only then when it is deemed safe to do so will Fishery Officers board a vessel. Fishery Officers will work with the Master of a vessel to ensure that no action is taken that may compromise the health and safety of either the vessel's crew or the boarding party. The Master of a vessel must alert the boarding party to any hazards they may encounter.

#### **Inspections**

Inspections will consist of but are not limited to:

- Documentation checks
- Catch assessments/weighing
- Gear checks
- Marine organism minimum size checks

#### **On commencement of an inspection**

The Fishery Officer will clearly state their intentions and may ask for assistance in carrying out their duties. It is at this point that any health and safety concerns should be addressed with the Fishery Officer

#### **On completion of an inspection**

Fishery Officer will inform you of the work they have carried out and any findings. They may highlight areas of legislation and provide advice where appropriate.

#### **In cases of suspected infringements**

Where a Fishery Officer encounters a suspected infringement of regulations they will issue and clearly explain a caution and your rights. The Fishery Officer may conduct an interview, take statements, collect evidence, seize equipment or catch, where this is done a receipt will be issued. In instances where a infringement of regulations are suspected the Joint Committee will endeavour to investigate the matter in a timely manner and individuals will always be provided the opportunity to attend an interview with investigating officers which will be

recorded in accordance with the Police and Criminal Evidence Act. Any decision to take legal action against an individual is not taken by the Fishery Officer on the scene but by the Clerk & Chief Fishery Officer in consultation with Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Joint Committee.

### **Meeting your expectations**

Fishery Officers will be provided with the training and the suitable equipment to enable them to act safely in the discharge of their duties and to provide accurate advice and/or direction. Risk assessments covering the inspection of vessels, premises, catches, vehicles and individuals are created and regularly reviewed. It is the intention of the Joint Committee that Fishery Officers assist those subject to inspection in complying with relevant legislation and that the inspection is conducted with minimum interference. At all times Fishery Officers will remain courteous and considerate and refrain from using inappropriate, unprofessional, aggressive, or profane language.

### **Fishery Officer expectations**

ESFJC expect that their Fishery Officers are treated in a courteous manner and free from harassment or abuse and will act in cases where this is not the case or in instances where a Fishery Officer is obstructed from carrying out their duties

### **Complaints**

Complaints regarding the conduct of an inspection should write to the Clerk & Chief Fishery Officer of Eastern Sea Fisheries Joint Committee detailing their concerns as it is a priority that all of the Joint Committees work is carried out to a high standard in a professional and courteous manner. All complaints will be investigated in fair and timely manner.

Clerk & Chief Fishery Officer  
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