

§6506. Commercial halibut fishing license

1. License required. Beginning January 1, 2023, a person may not engage in the activities authorized under this section without a current:

- A. Commercial halibut fishing license for a resident operator; [PL 2021, c. 627, §5 (NEW).]
- B. Commercial halibut fishing license for a resident operator and all crew members; [PL 2021, c. 627, §5 (NEW).]
- C. Commercial halibut fishing license for a nonresident operator and all crew members; or [PL 2021, c. 627, §5 (NEW).]
- D. Commercial halibut fishing license for an operator with a federal northeast multispecies groundfish permit authorizing halibut fishing for the operator and all crew members. [PL 2021, c. 627, §5 (NEW).]

[PL 2021, c. 627, §5 (NEW).]

2. Licensed activity; commercial license. The holder of a commercial halibut fishing license issued under subsection 1 may fish for, take, possess, ship, transport or sell halibut that the holder has taken using the vessel named on the license. Crew members aboard a license holder's vessel may fish for, take, possess, ship or transport halibut only if the license provides for crew members.

[PL 2025, c. 60, §1 (AMD).]

2-A. Exception to using vessel named on license holder's license for commercial license holders. Notwithstanding subsection 2, the commissioner may temporarily authorize a holder of a commercial halibut fishing license to use a vessel other than the vessel named on that license holder's license to fish for, take, possess, ship or transport halibut if the license holder documents to the commissioner that the vessel named on that license holder's license has become temporarily inoperable because of an accident or a mechanical failure and requests in writing to the commissioner that the commissioner authorize the use of another vessel to fish for or take halibut. The commissioner's authorization may require the license holder to fish for, take, possess and land halibut separately from any halibut taken under another license listing the same vessel to ensure that harvest limits are not exceeded. An authorization granted by the commissioner to a license holder due to an accident or a mechanical failure may not exceed 2 weeks. The commissioner may authorize one 2-week extension per license holder during the commercial halibut fishing season. An authorization under this subsection may not be granted by the commissioner in 2 consecutive years.

[PL 2025, c. 60, §2 (NEW).]

3. Eligibility. A commercial halibut fishing license issued under subsection 1 may be issued only to an individual.

[PL 2021, c. 627, §5 (NEW).]

4. Fees. Fees for commercial halibut fishing licenses issued under subsection 1 are as follows:

- A. For a commercial halibut fishing license for a resident operator, \$48; [PL 2021, c. 627, §5 (NEW).]
- B. For a commercial halibut fishing license for a resident operator and all crew members, \$128; [PL 2021, c. 627, §5 (NEW).]
- C. For a commercial halibut fishing license for a nonresident operator and all crew members, \$481; and [PL 2021, c. 627, §5 (NEW).]
- D. For a commercial halibut fishing license for an operator with a federal northeast multispecies groundfish permit authorizing halibut fishing for the operator and all crew members, \$2. [PL 2021, c. 627, §5 (NEW).]

The commissioner shall deposit fees collected pursuant to this subsection in the Halibut Fund established under section 6039.

[PL 2021, c. 627, §5 (NEW).]

5. Halibut tags. The holder of a commercial halibut fishing license issued under subsection 1 must annually purchase halibut tags to fish for or take halibut. A license holder may purchase an allotment of halibut tags only once per year. A vessel may have only one license holder's tags assigned to that vessel. The commissioner shall establish by rule the maximum number of halibut tags that may be issued to a license holder per year, and may establish up to 2 options for the number of tags a license holder may purchase. The commissioner may establish a fee, not to exceed \$4 per tag, for each purchase option. Unless otherwise specified in routine technical rules adopted by the commissioner pursuant to Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A, the following fees apply to halibut tags:

A. For 10 halibut tags, \$10; and [PL 2021, c. 627, §5 (NEW).]

B. For 25 halibut tags, \$100. [PL 2021, c. 627, §5 (NEW).]

The commissioner shall deposit fees collected pursuant to this subsection in the Halibut Fund established under section 6039.

[PL 2021, c. 627, §5 (NEW).]

6. License exemption. Notwithstanding subsection 1, a person may fish for, take, possess or transport a halibut without a license if the person has fished for or taken the halibut by tub trawl or by hook and line and if the halibut is only for personal use.

[PL 2023, c. 207, §14 (NEW).]

7. Violation. A person who violates this section commits a civil violation for which a fine of not less than \$100 nor more than \$500 may be adjudged.

[PL 2023, c. 207, §15 (NEW).]

8. Rules. The commissioner shall adopt rules to implement this section. Rules adopted pursuant to this subsection are routine technical rules as defined in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A.

[PL 2023, c. 207, §16 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2021, c. 627, §5 (NEW). PL 2023, c. 207, §§14-16 (AMD). PL 2025, c. 60, §§1, 2 (AMD).

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