



BELIZE HIGH SEAS FISHERIES UNIT
MINISTRY OF FINANCE
GOVERNMENT OF BELIZE

Policy Name:	BELIZE HIGH SEAS INSPECTION POLICY				
Approval Authority:	Registrar of Merchant Shipping	Original date of Adoption	August 2014	Reviewed:	January 2018
Responsible Executive:	Director of High Seas Fisheries	Revised:	March 2018		
Responsible Office:	Belize High Seas Fisheries Unit	Contact:	Valarie Lanza		

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0	Introduction	Page 2
2.0	Purpose	Page 2
3.0	Scope	Page 2
4.0	Authority	Page 2
5.0	Legislation	Page 3
6.0	Types of Inspection	Page 3
7.0	Inspection Process	Page 4
8.0	Selection Criteria for Inspectors	Page 4
9.0	Schedule of Inspections	Page 6
10.0	Inspector Selection Process	Page 6
11.0	Review of Policy	Page 7

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The rise of IUU activities, substandard vessel operations and non-compliance with domestic and international obligations all precipitates the importance for States to adopt and implement efficient standardized methods for vessel, catch and discharge inspections, not just to guarantee the safety of the vessel and crew but to ensure compliance with relevant and necessary conservation and management measures applicable to the fisheries and maritime sectors. Inspection is the process of examining the vessel to determine reasonable compliance with the minimum safety standards of the vessel, the catches stored on board and discharges at port. Pursuant to the High Seas Fishing (Monitoring, Control and Surveillance) Regulation, 2014, the landing of all fisheries products shall be inspected by authorized fisheries inspectors and/or the competent authority of the port.

The Government of Belize having analyzed the operation of its high seas fishing fleet and the lack of an effective and efficient inspection scheme decided to implement an inspection policy to ensure that discharge and transshipment operations of its licensed fishing vessels are conducted in accordance with domestic and international rules and regulations.

2.0 PURPOSE

This vessel inspection policy is developed to ensure the uniform and consistent administration and enforcement of national and international regulations and obligations as it relates to vessel inspection and is designed to protect the integrity of the vessel, its catches, transshipment and discharge activities.

3.0 SCOPE

This program shall apply to all fishing vessels licensed by the Belize High Seas Fisheries Unit.

4.0 AUTHORITY

The Belize High Seas Fisheries Unit under the Ministry of Finance has autonomy for the implementation of this Policy and to ensure that all Belize flagged vessels, catches and discharge operations are inspected in accordance with Belize's regulations and appropriate international agreements, conventions and protocols. Furthermore, it shall be responsible for taking all steps necessary to give these instruments full and complete effect to ensure that from a point of view of safety of life and environment, protection and sustainability of the fish stocks, a Belize flagged vessel is fit for the intended service and follows all international and relevant appropriate conservation and management measures.

5.0 LEGISLATION

National and international regulations and obligations delineates applicable vessel inspections. The High Seas Fishing (Monitoring Control and Surveillance) Regulation, 2014 and the High Seas Fishing Act, 2013 serves as the principal documents guiding fishing vessel inspection and by extension this Policy.

6.0 TYPES OF VESSEL INSPECTION

This policy provides for the following inspections and takes into consideration, inter alia, the following criteria.

1. General Safety Inspections

General Safety Inspections are focused in assisting the owners/agents avoid unnecessary delays in port and ensure that:

- Vessel has on board all required valid certificates,
- Vessel is properly manned and equipped for intended trade,
- Vessel's crew is properly trained and capable of performing basic survival techniques,
- Vessel and crew comply with the minimum standards set out in the IMO Conventions to which Belize is a party.

2. Catch and Discharge Inspections

Inspection of catch and discharge are carried out to ensure the integrity of the catches on board and their discharge operation. This type of inspection will ensure that:

- Catches taken and discharged are in accordance with quota allocation as appropriate,
- Catches have been stored in accordance with national and international regulations to ensure their integrity,
- Catches taken and discharged are not endangered and prohibited species,
- Catches taken and discharged are not juvenile species and sizes are in accordance with relevant size restrictions,
- The health of the catch has not been compromised,
- Catches taken has been properly recorded,
- Discharge operations are being recorded.

3. Compliance Inspections

Compliance inspection are carried out to ensure that vessel has on board all relevant document in compliance with national and international regulations, inter alia:

- Logbooks (catch and FAD)
- Valid fishing licenses
- Valid navigation documents
- VMS equipment
- E-log equipment
- Marking of vessel
- Marking of gears
- Appropriate mitigation measures

Note: General Safety Inspections are carried out in coordination with the Technical Department of the International Merchant Marine Registry of Belize as deemed necessary.

7.0 INSPECTION PROCESS

An inspection must be approved by the Director for High Seas Fisheries regardless of the purpose for the inspection. Inspections by national appointed inspectors shall be coordinated directly by the BHSFU and carried out in accordance with the National Inspection Manual. Under these circumstances, joint inspection operations may be organized with the appropriate port authority where discharge will take place.

Through bilateral arrangements, inspection of Belize flagged fishing vessels and their catches and discharges may be inspected by foreign inspectors that have been appointed on behalf of Belize to carry out such inspections. These may include independent inspectors or those appointed by a Flag state.

Where a request from a port state has been made to inspect a Belize flagged vessel and/or its catches and discharge, the Director will review the grounds for such request and a decision will be made to allow or deny the inspection. In such case, an authorized inspector from the port where vessel will discharge will be allowed to carry out the inspection.

8.0 SELECTION CRITERIA FOR VESSEL INSPECTION

Pursuant to the High Seas Fishing (Licensing) Regulations, No.33 of 2014, all vessels shall be required to undergo a vessel inspection prior to the obtainment of a new fishing license or renewal thereof.

Depending on its compliance history or previous inspection results, a vessel may be randomly selected for inspection. All vessels that intend to discharge catches which are intended for the EU market shall be subject to catch and discharge inspection. All other vessels shall be subject to 5% inspection of all annual discharges at port.

The risk analysis criteria for the selection of fishing vessels for discharge inspection are outlined below:

1. Level of Operations
 - a. Vessels that have a high level of operation, resulting in high discharge frequency will be subject to more frequent inspections in order to obtain a representative sample of their routine discharge operations.
 - b. Vessels that have a low level of operations which results in a low discharge frequency will be subject to more extemporaneous inspections.

2. Data Reporting
 - a. The data reported by vessels will be analyzed and compared with their annual fishing operation plan for a comparative analysis to determine accuracy and exhaustiveness of data reporting.
 - b. Vessels that continuously submit reports in an untimely manner or which are inconsistent with their level of operation will be subject to extemporaneous inspections to mitigate the risk of misreporting.

3. Vessel Monitoring
 - a. Vessels will be assigned to specific geographic zones and will be actively monitored to ensure that they operate exclusively within these zones. Any vessel that engages in suspicious activities including, inter alia, the following activities will be subject to inspection during their next call to port: -
 - Operating in close proximity (2 nautical miles) to authorized boundaries
 - Operating in close proximity (1 nautical mile) to other fishing vessels; and
 - Coming in contact with another fishing vessel without prior notification.

4. Compliance history

A vessel compliance history, including that of the owners and operators will be considered when selecting vessels for inspection. Those owners and operators who may

have a history of non-compliance or marginal compliance will be subject to an increased level of inspections to mitigate the risk of IUU fishing.

9.0 SCHEDULE OF INSPECTIONS

Inspections shall be scheduled in accordance with the abovementioned criteria and all necessary resources will be allocated to ensure the availability of inspectors at all predefined ports of landing. An inspection schedule shall be developed annually to ensure the following inspections are carried out.

- Safety Inspection – As necessary
- Discharge inspections – 5% of the total operational fleet – this percentage is apart from the vessels whose catches are intended for EU market.
- Compliance inspection – As necessary

10.0 INSPECTOR SELECTION PROCESS

National Inspectors shall be any qualified and experienced member of the Belize High Seas Fisheries Unit or any person hired locally by the Unit to carry out this responsibility.

Outsourced inspectors shall be selected based on qualifications and experience. An inspector shall be required to have a minimum of a college degree in science with an emphasis on marine biology or related field in biology in addition to one-year work experience in the fishery industry. Inspectors who lack the necessary qualifications but have more than two years' experience in the fishery industry shall also be considered. All data relevant to the qualifications and experience of the inspector shall be contained in their Terms of Reference.

The BSFHU Inspection Manual has been prepared to provide guidance to inspectors regarding the inspection process and requirements.

All inspectors once selected shall be required to sign a Terms of Reference and shall be provided with an appointment letter and identification card.

General Safety Inspectors appointed by IMMARBE shall be utilized for all routine vessel inspections and those inspections that are required prior to the issuance of a fishing license.

Belize shall enter into bilateral agreements with other States or organizations, as appropriate, for the provision of inspector services or exchange of information of inspections carried out. These States, shall include, but not limited to, States in whose ports Belize flagged vessels discharge.

11.0 REVIEW OF POLICY

This Policy shall be reviewed and revised as deemed necessary by the Director of the Belize High Seas Fisheries Unit. Relevant changes will be incorporated taking into consideration the effectiveness of its operation during the previous year.

This Policy is made in accordance with Part VIII, Section 50(1)(k) of the Belize High Seas Fishing Act, 2013, is hereby approved this 2nd day of March 2018, at BELMOPAN, Belize


Mr. Claude B.F. Haylock
Registrar of Merchant Shipping
Ministry of Finance
Government of Belize




Valarie Lanza
Director of High Seas Fisheries
Belize High Seas Fisheries Unit
Ministry of Finance
Government of Belize

