



# CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

PO Box 97, 190 Rogers Avenue, Milford, CT 06460

*Bureau of Aquaculture*



**DARIEN, NORWALK AND WESTPORT  
2018 *VIBRIO PARAHAEMOLYTICUS* CONTROL PLAN FOR OYSTER HARVEST  
EFFECTIVE JUNE 1 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 30  
MAY 30, 2018**

**STATE OF CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE BUREAU OF AQUACULTURE (DA/BA)  
COMMERCIAL SHIPPING RESTRICTIONS FOR OYSTERS HARVESTED FROM THE WATERS OF DARIEN, NORWALK, AND WESTPORT**

**Company Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**SS#** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**A.1. SSI (Harvester/Dealer):**

1. This plan applies to all oysters harvested for human consumption. No provision of this plan shall apply to seed oysters.
2. The requirements of this plan shall apply to all oysters harvested from the waters of Darien, Norwalk and Westport in Connecticut’s coastal waters from June 1 through September 30, 2018, inclusive.
3. Rapid cooling of oysters shall be triggered when surface water temperatures in the Darien, Norwalk, Westport growing area reach 20°C/68°F as measured using the NASA G1SST Sea Surface Temperature Regional Ocean Modeling Product<sup>i</sup> and the nearest NOAA water temperature buoy BRHC3<sup>ii</sup> in Bridgeport. The average date associated with a surface water temperature of 20°C/68°F in Darien, Norwalk, Westport growing areas is June 15<sup>th</sup>. Historically, surface water temperatures have reached 20°C/68°F as early as June 1 at these stations.
4. The DA/BA will notify each Connecticut shellstock shipper licensed to harvest oysters in the Darien, Norwalk, Westport area when surface temperatures are approaching 20°C/68°F, and will inform harvesters of the required start date for rapid cooling controls.
5. All oysters harvested from June 1 through September 30, 2018 shall be adequately shaded\* from direct sunlight while onboard the vessel and during transport from harvest area to original dealer. *(Aquaculture producers may request an exemption from the shading requirement from DA/BA when submitting their signed CT VP Control Plan prior to the start of Vibrio season. Unless an exemption is granted by DA/BA, adequate shading remains a requirement of all producers.)* \*See Definitions Section
6. All oysters harvested between June 1 and September 30, when surface water temperatures are greater than or equal to 20°C/68°F from the waters of Darien, Norwalk or Westport shall be

immediately placed into an on-vessel ice slurry (or method Approved by the DA/BA) for rapid cooling to 50°F internal temperature.

7. Any approved method of rapid cooling shall be capable of reducing internal temperatures of oysters to <50°F within 1 hour (or other timeframe based upon consultation and Approval by DA/BA).
8. A DA/BA Approved rapid cooling method will allow harvesters to continue working within a twelve-hour time limit from harvest to refrigeration.
9. Ice shall be made from either a potable or Approved or Conditionally Approved growing area water source and properly protected from contamination prior to use. If growing area water is used for ice production, the area must be in the open status.
10. In order to avoid contamination of oysters by bacteria associated with sediments, shellstock shall be washed free from mud, sediment and other material using water from the open harvest area prior to dipping in the slurry.
11. While using the ice slurry (or other DA/BA Approved method) to achieve rapid cooling, adequacy of ice shall be monitored to ensure proper cooling temperatures are maintained.
12. While using the ice slurry to achieve rapid cooling, water clarity shall be monitored to ensure against impairment from sediment and particulate buildup due to extended use. *NOTE: Good judgment needs to be exercised when evaluating the slurry water for excess turbidity. If you are in doubt, change the water.*
13. Adequate ice or mechanical refrigeration must be available throughout the harvest period to maintain the internal temperature of rapidly cooled oysters held aboard the vessel at 50°F or less.
14. Once placed under temperature control and until sale to the processor or final consumer, shellstock shall<sup>iii</sup>:
  - (a) Be iced; or
  - (b) Be placed in a storage area or conveyance maintained at 45° F (7.2° C) or less.
15. Each harvester will maintain a harvest log book that records the date, time of harvest, time to dock, amount harvested (count, bags, etc.) and time sold or time refrigerated recorded in indelible ink. Harvest time will be recorded in log before the vessel leaves the harvest area.
16. Each harvester will maintain a Rapid Cooling Log that records the internal temperature of oysters that have been rapidly cooled on an hourly basis.

Please note that each observation of internal temperature must include:

- Actual temperature observation (i.e. 47°F NOT <50°F)
- Actual time that the temperature was recorded (i.e. 2:15 pm NOT <5 hours);
- Initial of person performing the observation.

17. Shellstock invoices/documentation shall include the time of harvest\* in addition to harvest date, harvest area (Lot and Town), type of shellstock and quantity, as well as Shipping Document\* including VPCP Time to Temperature Control Statement\*.

18. Pursuant to *CGS Sec. 26-192c. Inspection and regulations concerning shellfish* any license may be suspended pending revocation proceedings, or amended, if shellfishing operations or harvesting areas are a public health hazard or if the licensee has violated any provision of this section, section 26-192e, 26-192f, or 26-192h or any applicable department regulation or any section of the public health code.

19. The State Shellfish Authority (DA/BA) must approve each vessel's ice slurry or *rapid cooling system* on an annual basis prior to implementation or prior to a change in the rapid cooling process during the VPCP control months.

A. Corrective Action:

1. Dealers shall reject any lots of oysters that are not properly tagged and invoiced as required by this Plan.
2. Dealer shall reject any lots of oysters that have not been received within the harvest time frames required by the Plan.
3. Dealers who receive shipments of oysters that are not compliant with the requirements of Section A of this Plan shall place the shellstock on internal hold and immediately notify the Department of Agriculture Bureau of Aquaculture (DABA). Dealers shall then document the deviation as a Corrective Action and await instruction from the DABA for final disposition of potentially time/temperature abused oysters.

C. Enforcement:

1. Representatives of regulatory agencies (DA/BA, Food and Drug Administration (FDA, Department of Environmental Protection (DEEP), etc.) shall conduct periodic unannounced inspections at harvest sites, common landings, and wholesale dealer facilities to determine compliance with the requirements of this Plan.
2. Any new cooling process or any process that has changed since the previous season (such as a new cooler, different equipment, change in volume of shellfish harvested, etc.) must be evaluated by DA/BA prior to the start of the VPCP season.
3. Cooling processes that have been previously evaluated and validated by DA/BA must be re-evaluated within 30 days of the start of the VPCP season.
4. Cooling processes may also be evaluated by DA/BA under worst case conditions during the course of the VPCP season.
5. All shellfish harvested under this plan shall be subject to embargo, disposal, or return to growing area under supervision if found to be significantly time/temperature abused or non-compliant with requirements of this Plan.
6. Refusal of harvesters and/or dealers to allow inspection or inability to maintain compliance with the requirements of this plan may result in enforcement up to and including suspension and revocation of harvester and/or dealer license in accordance with *CGS Sec. 26-192c*.

\*Definitions:

**Adequately Iced** means the containers holding the shellfish have enough ice on the shellfish that is sufficient to ensure that immediate cooling begins and continues to provide cooling until required internal temperatures are achieved within 5 hours of being placed under temperature control OR to maintain the temperature of previously cooled shellfish at  $\leq 50^{\circ}\text{F}$ , e.g. post ice slurry.

**Adequately Shaded** means that measures shall be taken to prevent oysters from direct exposure to sunlight that might cause a significant increase in pathogenic growth due to an increase in temperature.

**Ice Slurry** means a mixture of ice and water containing the volume of ice necessary to maintain a temperature in the slurry that is sufficient to ensure that the rapid cooling process begins immediately upon submergence of the shellstock and that the process is capable of reducing the internal temperature of the shellstock to  $50^{\circ}\text{F}$  within 30 minutes.

**Internal Temperature** means the internal temperature of the meat of the animal as measured using a calibrated probe thermometer; under most circumstances when measuring the temperature of previously cooled product, the internal temperature of shellstock is reflected by the external temperature of the space surrounding the shellfish, or the external temperature of the shell at the center of a packaged mass of shellstock (box, bag, etc) and may be measured by inserting a thermometer probe into the package to an appropriate depth.

*NOTE: When verifying a rapid cooling procedure, the shellstock must be opened and the actual internal temperature of the meat measured using a calibrated probe thermometer, as there may be a significant difference between the amount of time it takes to cool the shell of the animal compared to the meat. An approved rapid cooling procedure must be verified using the internal temperature of the meat as measured.*

**Rapid Cooling** is defined as the reduction of the internal temperature of shellstock to  $50^{\circ}\text{F}$  within 1 hour of harvest or time of first exposure.

**Shipping Documentation** is defined as the documentation required by the NSSP Model Ordinance to accompany all shipments of shellstock that indicates (1) time of shipment; (2) that conveyance was pre-chilled; and (3) notice of any shellstock that was shipped prior to meeting required internal temperature and notice of a time/temperature recording device indicating that continuing cooling has occurred. In order to comply with the requirements of this VPCP, the **VPCP Time to Temperature Control Statement** must also be included with the shipping documentation.

**Temperature Control** is defined as mechanical refrigeration or other conveyance pre-chilled and maintained at  $45^{\circ}\text{F}$  or below and capable of reducing the internal temperature of product to  $50^{\circ}\text{F}$  within 5 hours.

**Time of Harvest** means the time when the first shellstock is removed from the water or, in the case of intertidal harvest, the time of first exposure.

**VPCP Time to Temperature Control Statement** is a statement that accompanies a shellstock shipment that indicates the time interval at which shellstock was placed under temperature control and cooled to an internal temperature meeting applicable VPCP control plan requirements.

The CT Department of Agriculture Bureau of Aquaculture will review this Plan on an annual basis and revise it as needed to maintain compliance with the National Shellfish Sanitation Program's Model Ordinance.

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<sup>i</sup> Chao, Y., Z. Li, J. D. Farrara, and P. Huang: Blended sea surface temperatures from multiple satellites and in-situ observations for coastal oceans. *Journal of Atmospheric and Oceanic Technology*, 26 (7), 1435-1446, 10.1175/2009JTECHO592.1, 2009.

<sup>ii</sup> NOAA Station BRHC3 - 8467150 - Bridgeport, CT Buoy Station Page: [http://www.ndbc.noaa.gov/station\\_page.php?station=brhc3](http://www.ndbc.noaa.gov/station_page.php?station=brhc3)  
NOAA BRHC3 Climatic Summary Plot: [http://www.ndbc.noaa.gov/view\\_climplot.php?station=brhc3&meas=st](http://www.ndbc.noaa.gov/view_climplot.php?station=brhc3&meas=st)

<sup>iii</sup> [ISSC] Interstate Shellfish Sanitation Conference. 2011. National Shellfish Sanitation Program: Guide for the Control of Molluscan Shellfish, 2011 Revision. US Department of Health and Human Services Public Health Service Food and Drug Administration.