

***NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE POLICY DIRECTIVE 30-120  
DECEMBER 20, 2004***

***Administration and Operations***

***NMFS PERMIT FEES***

**NOTICE:** This publication is available at: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/directives/>.

**OPR:** F/P (M. Holliday)

**Certified by:** F/P (M. Holliday)

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***SUMMARY OF REVISIONS:***

Introduction. The authority for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to charge permit fees to recover its administrative costs is contained in five statutes. Historically, each NMFS permit program individually decided whether or not to use this authority to charge an administrative fee for the recovery of permit processing and issuance expenses. The result is a set of inconsistent permit fee policies around the country. The purpose of this directive is to establish a more consistent agency permit program that recovers the expenses of permit processing and issuance for all permits issued by NMFS to the extent allowed by law.

Objective. Permits are used to identify participants who are eligible to conduct specific activities in programs regulated by NMFS. To receive this benefit, participants must meet certain criteria and submit an application and supporting documentation to a specified NMFS office. The process of application review, certification and permit issuance carries with it an administrative cost. The objective is to implement a consistent policy across NMFS of recovering these costs from applicants. As part of the policy implementation, issues to be resolved include retention of permit fees in NMFS accounts, harmonization of the regional application, review, certification and issuance process, and establishing uniform online application and payment options for applicants.

Authorities and Responsibilities. This directive establishes the following authorities and responsibilities:

- (1) Under its authority for administration of the Fisheries Information System, the Office of Science and Technology has responsibility for developing and managing the plan to transition to the new policy of recovering fees for all permits.
- (2) To assist in and monitor the implementation of the policy, a Leadership Council subcommittee is created comprised of the NMFS Chief Information Officer, the directors of the Offices of Science and Technology, Sustainable Fisheries, Management and Budget, Enforcement, and the Northeast Regional Administrator. The subcommittee will be chaired by the director of the Office of Science and Technology.
- (3) The plan should target full implementation of this policy within 18 months of issuance of this directive.

