

Kent & Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority

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CODE OF CONDUCT FOR INSPECTIONS

This Code of Conduct should be read in conjunction with other statutory and policy requirements.

RESPONSIBILITY DURING INSPECTIONS

Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Officers (IFCOs) are employed by Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities (IFCA's) to carry out inspections of marine organisms, fishing vessels, fishing equipment, fish wholesalers, premises, vehicles, shore gatherers, anglers and any persons collecting marine organisms in order to monitor compliance and enforce EU, UK, local fisheries and environmental legislation both ashore and out to 6nm from the coastline. Some IFCO's also enforce on behalf of other government bodies such as the Environment Agency and the Marine Management Organisation.

Whilst carrying out inspections, IFCO's will endeavor to conduct inspections in a courteous and fair manner and will promote a professional image on behalf of the IFCA. IFCO's will state their intentions and may ask for assistance in order to carry out their duties. Those subject to inspection are expected to show a level of cooperation and courtesy that will allow the IFCO's to carry out their duties without fear of reprisal, harassment or abuse and to avoid any action which would amount to obstruction of the IFCO. All IFCO's carry warrant/ID cards which will be made available for inspection upon request or when it is practicable to do so.

To comply with Health and Safety Regulations, all persons subject to inspection, particularly those in charge of a vessel, must alert the IFCO carrying out the inspection to any potential hazards and it is expected that the master/skipper of a vessel, or any other person being inspected will maintain good communication with IFCO's in order to ensure health and safety is not compromised.

On the conclusion of an inspection, the IFCO will inform those inspected of the findings. This may result in words of advice being given, or a caution being issued where the person inspected is suspected of not complying with the relevant legislation. If it is necessary to seize equipment during an inspection, the IFCO will issue a receipt.

BOARDING VESSELS

In order to facilitate an inspection, it is expected that masters/skippers of vessels maintain a proper visual watch and a proper VHF watch on Channel 16 (VHF), and they cooperate and respond if hailed by radio or other means. In the interests of health & safety, the master/skipper will be asked to facilitate a safe boarding for IFCO's carrying out inspections and to cooperate and comply with specific instructions to aid a safe boarding and compliance with legislation. Similar actions

will be necessary when disembarking from the vessel. Examples of such requests may be to slow down, to offer a lee or haul gear and provide a suitable boarding ladder. Each individual inspection will dictate the nature of the request made.

Once on board, the IFCO will identify themselves to the skipper of the vessel subject to the inspection. The IFCO will explain the reason and purpose of the inspection. The presence of the master/skipper can be requested for all or some of the elements of the inspection process. Assistance of the master/skipper and/or crew must be provided if it is requested.

It is the intention of the IFCA/IFCO's to conduct inspections so far as possible with minimal interference.

SHORE INSPECTIONS

The IFCO will identify themselves to the person and explain the reason and purpose of the inspection. The presence of the person/s subject to an inspection (including for premises and vehicles) can be requested for all or some of the elements of an inspection process. Assistance of the person/s being inspected must be provided if it is requested.

It is the intention of the IFCA/IFCO's to conduct shore inspections so far as possible with the minimum of interference.

INVESTIGATIONS

The IFCA will endeavour to carry out necessary further investigations leading from inspections in a timely manner.

STANDARD OF DRESS

IFCO's will not always be in uniform when carrying out their duties. However, all IFCO's will present their Warrant Card if requested to do so or when it is practicable to do so.

CONTACTS FOR ENQUIRIES

We are committed to providing an exemplary service. If you are not satisfied with any aspect of our service or experiencing dissatisfaction during any of these processes please refer to our Customer Complaint Process located in our Annual Plan on our website. If you have any questions about this document, the carrying out of inspections or subsequent investigations please either call or write to us using the contact details at the top of this document.