

Guidance on harvesting live bivalve molluscs and live shellfish

Anyone harvesting, handling, or selling **live bivalve molluscs** (oysters, mussels, scallops, clams, and cockles etc.) and **other live shellfish** (whelks, periwinkles, etc.) must comply with strict legal requirements. This leaflet describes these requirements.

Food poisoning risks from live shellfish

The consumption of contaminated live bivalve molluscs can cause illness with a range of symptoms from vomiting and diarrhoea to partial paralysis and even death. Live bivalve molluscs are filter feeders therefore any contaminants in the water such as E. coli, viruses and algal toxins can be retained in their flesh. It is critical that harvesters and food business operators comply with shellfish hygiene legislation to prevent food poisoning occurring.

Harvesting live bivalve molluscs from classified areas

Live bivalve molluscs must **only** be harvested from classified production areas. The classification determines how the shellfish have to be treated after harvesting, to ensure they are safe to eat.

Classification categories

- **A class:** Bivalve molluscs can be harvested for direct human consumption.
- **B class:** Bivalve molluscs can be marketed for human consumption after being treated in an approved purification centre, being subjected to an approved heat treatment process, or after relaying in an approved class A relaying area.
- **C class:** Bivalve molluscs can be marketed for human consumption only after relaying, for at least two months, in an approved relaying area.
After relaying, bivalve molluscs must, where necessary, be treated in an approved purification centre or be subjected to an approved heat treatment process.
- **Prohibited areas:** Bivalve molluscs must not be subject to production or be collected.
- **Unclassified areas:** Bivalve molluscs must not be subject to production or be collected.

Non-filter feeding gastropods (whelks, periwinkles etc.) and echinoderms (sea urchins etc.) do not have to be harvested from classified areas.

It is illegal to harvest live bivalve molluscs from prohibited or unclassified areas.

Guidance on completing Registration Documents

Registration Documents are an important link in a chain of public health control measures designed to ensure shellfish placed on the market are safe to eat. It is essential that the origin of shellfish is known, and that full traceability is maintained from harvesting to final sale. This makes sure the shellfish can be recalled if a food safety incident occurs.

Shellfish types that must be accompanied by a Registration Document

Registration Documents are required for batches of live bivalve molluscs and marine gastropods. Registration Documents are **not required** for fish, crabs, lobsters, cuttlefish, or squid.

Completing a Registration Document

1. The Registration Document must be completed in full.
2. Registration Documents have a unique serial number and must not be photocopied.
3. A new Registration Document must be used for each batch of shellfish.
4. Each Registration Document consists of THREE copies, printed on carbonless paper. The TOP copy must be kept by the person receiving the shellfish for a period of not less than 12 months. The SECOND copy must be returned to the Food and Safety Team at East Suffolk Council. The THIRD copy must be kept by the harvester for a period of not less than 12 months.
5. The SECOND copy of the completed Registration Document must be returned to either of the addresses given below. Alternatively, a scan or photograph can be emailed to environment@eastsuffolk.gov.uk.
6. When completing the Registration Document, it is important that all three copies are aligned on top of one another, to ensure your writing is copied accurately onto the sheets below.
7. The relevant sections of the Registration Document must be completed so that they are easy to read and cannot be altered.
8. Give as much information as possible to identify the location of harvesting.

9. The common and scientific names of the shellfish species being harvested should be given.

Scientific Name	Common Name	Scientific Name	Common Name
<i>Mytilus edulis</i>	Blue mussel	Other <i>Mytilus spp.</i>	Mediterranean mussel and hybrids
<i>Ostrea edulis</i>	Native oyster	<i>Crassostrea gigas</i>	Pacific oyster
<i>Mya arenaria</i>	Gapers	<i>Ensis spp.</i>	Razor clams
<i>Cerastoderma edule</i>	Common cockle	<i>Venerupis senegalensis</i>	Pullet carpet clam
<i>Littorina littorea</i>	Common winkle	<i>Spisula solida</i>	Surf clam
<i>Buccinum spp.</i>	Whelk	<i>Mercenaria mercenaria</i>	Hard clam
<i>Pecten maximus</i>	King scallop	<i>Tapes spp.</i>	Manilla, native, carpet shell clams
<i>Aequipecten opercularis</i>	Queen scallop		

Keeping batches of live shellfish and Registration Documents together

A Registration Document must be correctly completed as soon as a batch of live shellfish is landed.

The document must accompany the batch at all times from the production area and between establishments, up to and including arrival of the batch at a relaying area, purification centre, dispatch centre or processing establishment. These establishments will usually be approved under Regulation (EC) No. 853/2004 and will have a unique approval number.

If a batch is split for any reason, it is the responsibility of the person having control of the original batch to ensure that the information accompanying the original batch accompanies each sub-batch in the same form as the Registration Document, together with the full name and address of the person splitting the batch. Reproduction of the registration document is not permitted in any other circumstances.

Food business operators receiving or transporting live bivalve molluscs

Food Business Operators may accept a batch of live bivalve molluscs, up to and including its arrival at a purification centre, processing establishment or dispatch centre, **only** if it is accompanied by a Registration Document which has been properly completed.

Whenever a food business operator transports a batch of live bivalve molluscs between establishments, up to and including its the arrival at a purification centre, processing establishment or dispatch centre, it must be accompanied by a Registration Document.

Exemptions

A registration document is not required for the direct supply of small quantities of **primary products** (unprocessed live shellfish in its natural form) that has been harvested and sent directly to the final consumer, or to local retail establishments directly supplying the final consumer.

For live bivalve molluscs, a small quantity equates to a total amount of not more than 25 tonnes harvested in a calendar year. The maximum harvested in a year can be made up of different species of bivalve mollusc, so long as neither the total allowance for each species nor the overall total is exceeded.

East Suffolk Council may consider it is not necessary for a food business operator to complete a Registration Document if:

- the food business operator harvesting live bivalve molluscs **also** operates the purification centre, processing establishment, dispatch centre or relaying area that is receiving the live bivalve molluscs; and
- all the establishments operated by the harvester fall within the jurisdiction of East Suffolk Council.

In these circumstances, East Suffolk Council may issue a Permanent Transport Authorisation (PTA) as an alternative to separate Registration Documents.

Making a request for Registration Documents

Registration Documents are available free of charge from East Suffolk Council and can be requested online by visiting <https://my.eastsuffolk.gov.uk>.

Completed copies of the Registration Document must be returned to the Food and Safety Team without delay to either of the addresses detailed below. Alternatively, a scan or photograph can be emailed to environment@eastsuffolk.gov.uk. Failure to return completed copies may result in a delay to further Registration Documents being issued.



LEGAL ADDRESS East Suffolk House, Station Road, Melton, Woodbridge IP12 1RT

POSTAL ADDRESS Riverside, 4 Canning Road, Lowestoft NR33 0EQ

Inspection of Registration Documents

Officers of East Suffolk Council have the authority to inspect Registration Documents held by harvesters and food business operators, in order to ensure that they are being completed and used correctly. Officers may make random visits to worked shellfish production areas in order to check documents. They may also ask to see previously completed documents to verify that they are being properly filled in and used correctly.

Legislation

Retained EU Law Regulation No. 853/2004 sets out criteria for the harvesting, movement, relaying, processing, dispatch, and sale of live shellfish, including live bivalve molluscs from classified production areas. These regulations are law in the UK and are implemented by means of the Food Safety and Hygiene (England) Regulations 2013.

Further information and advice

Food Standards Agency website: www.food.gov.uk

Food and Safety Team webpages: [Shellfish handling and hygiene » East Suffolk Council](#)

East Suffolk Council telephone: 03330 162 000

Failure to comply with these requirements.

If shellfish are harvested from unclassified or prohibited beds, or if a batch of live shellfish is not accompanied by a completed Registration Document, food authorities are empowered to seize them and seek an order for their destruction through the Court. Further charges can also be brought against the harvester.

A person found guilty of an offence under these regulations can be subject to a fine, and/or imprisonment of up to two years.