

## **Redeployment of Observers in the Northeast: Waiver Process**

The Northeast Fisheries Science Center will issue a waiver to vessels selected for observer or at-sea monitor coverage if one of the two criteria are met:

**Criteria 1:** Observers or at-sea monitors are not available for deployment.

**Criteria 2:** The observer providers cannot meet the safety protocols imposed by a state on commercial fishing crew or by the vessel owners or operators on its crew.

Our efforts are intended to ensure observers and monitors are following safety protocols equivalent to or exceeding those that fishermen are following.

### **Vessels that are required to notify using the Pre-Trip Notification System (PTNS)**

- If a vessel has been selected to carry an observer or at-sea monitor, they will be contacted by a provider. At that point, the vessel owners or operators would then communicate their vessel's safety plan.
  - If the provider is able to meet or exceed the safety plan of the vessel or vessel company, the provider will cover the trip.
  - If the provider is unable to meet the safety requirements the vessel has implemented, the provider will decline the trip and notify NMFS to issue a waiver.
  - If the provider accepts the trip but the observer does not feel safe to deploy due to coronavirus concerns or because an observer is unavailable for deployment, the provider will decline the trip and notify NMFS to issue a waiver.

### **Vessels that qualify for Industry Funded Scallop (IFS) coverage:**

- If selected for coverage, the vessel owners or operators should contact the observer provider company to discuss trip logistics and their safety requirements.
  - If the provider is able to meet or exceed the safety plan of the vessel or vessel company, the provider will cover the trip.
  - If the provider cannot meet the vessels safety protocols then the provider(s) will decline the trip and notify NMFS to issue a waiver. NMFS staff will verify the vessel contacted all three provider companies and email the vessel a waiver for the trip.
  - If the provider accepts the trip, but the observer does not feel safe to deploy due to coronavirus concerns or because an observer is unavailable for deployment, the provider will decline the trip and notify NMFS to issue a waiver.

### **Vessels selected verbally over the phone or at the dock or via a mailed selection letter**

- Provider selects the vessel for at the dock or over the phone to schedule a trip. During the dock intercept/solicitation, the vessel owners or operators would communicate their vessel's safety plan.
  - If the provider is able to meet or exceed the safety plan of the vessel or vessel company, the provider will cover the trip.
  - If the provider is unable to meet the safety requirements the vessel has implemented, the provider will decline the trip and notify NMFS to issue a waiver.
  - If the provider accepts the trip but the observer does not feel safe to deploy due to coronavirus concerns, the provider will decline the trip and notify NMFS to issue a waiver.