

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

EPA Region 10 Dive Team Compliance Inspections of Permitted Discharges at Seafood Processors and Log Transfer Sites

What: The EPA Region 10 Dive Team has conducted compliance inspections of pollutant discharges permitted under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) at seafood processors and log transfer facilities (LTF) in coastal Alaska.

Why: EPA periodically conducts "surprise" SCUBA-based inspections of pipes discharging wastes and any resulting deposits for compliance with the conditions of NPDES permits. Permit conditions include limitations on the size of discharged waste particles (e.g., ground to one half inch for seafood waste solids in most of Alaska) and the area of the deposition field (e.g., often one acre for both seafood processors and log transfer facilities). Thickness of waste deposits, impacts on benthic communities, and water quality conditions at discharge sites are data needed to evaluate permit compliance. The Region 10 dive unit is also asked to collect samples on occasion for evaluation of permit effectiveness and evaluation of permit changes.

Where: Compliance inspections for seafood processors have been conducted throughout Southeast Alaska and Dutch Harbor in the Aleutian Islands. LTF survey was in Port Fredrick near Hoonah, AK.

When: Compliance inspections customarily occur between April and October and have been conducted intermittently since 1977.

How: Observations are made, photographs and video records are taken, and core samples of sediment may be collected. All data are synthesized as inspection reports for the compliance record of each facility inspected.

Results: Inspection information is used to develop NPDES permit conditions as well as support enforcement actions when permit limits and conditions have been violated.

More Details: Compliance Inspection Reports and, in some cases, enforcement actions and civil penalties for violations of NPDES permit conditions.

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[Video: Compliance Inspection at an Alaska Seafood Processor Outfall inspection \(2 minutes, 21 MB Quicktime format\)](#)

Photos:

A typical log raft operation



Typical discharge from a seafood processing plant, Sitka, 2003.



View of a seafood outfall underwater, Cordova, 2010



View of divers beginning a dive inspection using tethered SCUBA, Cordova, 2010. Tethered SCUBA allowed divers in this high current area to accurately map waste pile size, despite high tidal current exchanges near the facilities.



Tender Brent Richmond (wearing personal floatation device at left) conducts potable water decontamination on diver Alan Humphrey after a seafood outfall dive, Cordova, 2010.



Discharged waste on the bottom near a seafood processing plant.



Occasionally large size pieces of salmon are discharged from the seafood processors.



Mollusk on top of old waste near Trident North - (Moon snail – *Polinices sp.*), Cordova, 2010.



Looking for a meal: Sharks circling above seafood discharge, Ketchikan, 2000.



Rob Pedersen, operating video camera during a seafood inspection.



Sediment core analysis conducted to determine seafood waste impact on benthic life, Sitka, 2003.

