
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 (IFCAs) 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 IFCOs also conduct enforcement on behalf of other government bodies such as the Environment Agency and the Marine Management Organisation.

Whilst carrying out inspections, IFCOs will endeavor to conduct inspections in a courteous and fair manner and will promote a professional image on behalf of the IFCA. IFCOs 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 IFCOs 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 IFCOs 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 IFCO/s carrying out the inspection to any potential hazards and it is expected that the masters/skipper of a vessel, or any other person being inspected will maintain good communication with IFCAs in order to ensure Health and Safety is not compromised.

On the conclusion of an inspection, the IFCO will inform those inspected of their 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 VHF watch on Channel 16 (VHF) and cooperate and respond when hailed by radio or by other means. In the interests of Health & Safety, the master/skipper will be asked to facilitate a safe boarding for IFCOs 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 him/her self to the master/skipper of the vessel subject to the inspection. The Officer 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 a

inspection process. Assistance of the master/skipper and/or crew must be provided if it is requested.

It is the intention of the IFCA/IFCOs to conduct inspections so far as possible with the minimum of interference.

SHORE INSPECTIONS

The IFCO will identify him/her self 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/IFCOs 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

IFCOs will not always be in uniform when carrying out their duties. However, IFCOs will produce their Warrant Card if requested 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 www.southern-ifca.gov.uk or if you have any questions about this code of conduct, the carrying out of inspections or subsequent investigations please either call or write to Southern IFCA at the above contact details.