

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR INSPECTIONS
INSHORE FISHERIES AND CONSERVATION AUTHORITIES (IFCAs)

This Code of Conduct should be read in conjunction with other statutory and policy requirements. This is a framework document and individual Authorities may provide additional information according to specific needs and circumstances.

RESPONSIBILITY DURING INSPECTIONS

Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Officers (IFCOs) are employed by Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities to carry out inspections of marine organisms, fishing vessels, fishing equipment and vehicles and to monitor compliance and enforce EU, UK, local fisheries and environmental legislation both ashore and out to 6nm from the coastline. Some IFCOs also enforce on behalf of other government bodies such as the Environment Agency and the Marine Management Organisation.

Whilst carrying out inspections, IFCOs will endeavour 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.

Persons subject to inspection must alert the IFCO carrying out the inspection to any potential hazards and it is expected that IFCOs and Masters of vessels being inspected will maintain good communication 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

A lead enforcement officer will identify him/herself to the skipper of the vessel subject of the inspection. The Officer will explain the reason and purpose of the inspection.

The presence of the skipper can be requested for all or some of the elements of an inspection process. Assistance of the skipper and/or crew must be provided if it is requested .

All IFCO's carry warrant/ID cards which will be made available for inspection upon request or when it is practicable to do so .

In order to facilitate an inspection, it is expected that Masters of vessels maintain a proper VHF watch on Channel 16 and cooperate and respond when hailed.

In the interests of Health & Safety, Masters 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. 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.

It is the intention of the IFCA's to conduct inspections so far as possible with minimal 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, all IFCOs will present their Warrant Card when identifying themselves.

CONTACTS FOR ENQUIRIES

Any questions about this document, the carrying out of inspections or subsequent investigations or anyone experiencing dissatisfaction during any of these processes can send their concerns in writing to the Chief Officer of the relevant IFCA. The time for responding may depend on the nature of the concerns highlighted but where possible such concerns will be addressed in a timely manner.

Adopted: IFCA Chief Officers Group
January 2012