

Manitoba 2025/2026 Commercial Fishing Guide



Commercial fishing in Manitoba is governed under regulations made under the Manitoba's Fisheries Act and the Federal Fisheries Act of Canada. This guide provides a brief summary of some of the most commonly applied regulations. All federal and provincial regulations apply, and for a complete list please go to:

<https://gov.mb.ca/fish-wildlife/fish/legislation/index.html>

Marking Gear

- A gill net or string of gill nets must be marked at each end with a pole extending at least 1 meter (3') above the water or ice, flag measuring at least 20 by 20 cm (8" x 8").
- Each pole or flag must be clearly marked with the person's Fisher Number assigned by the department. The number must be visible without raising the net from the water or ice (i.e. on the pole). **MB-12345CF**
- Gear must only be marked with the person's Fisher Number. No other markings, including Treaty Numbers or other fisher numbers are allowed.

Restricted Areas

- Commercial fishers may not fish within 1.5 kms of the location where a stream or a river enters a lake. If unsure, fishers should contact their District Conservation Officer.
- Commercial Fishing Licences are normally issued only on lakes, not rivers. In the small number of cases where they are issued for a river, nets may not block more than 2/3 of the river channel.

Restricted Species

- All caught live Lake Sturgeon must be released immediately and all dead Lake Sturgeon must be immediately submitted to the nearest Regional or District Office. It is illegal to possess Lake Sturgeon caught by commercial fishing.
- Channel Catfish may only be sold to the end consumer. Sales of Channel Catfish to all stores and restaurants is **PROHIBITED**. Channel Catfish **cannot** be exported outside Manitoba.

Decayed Fish

- Fish (except rough fish) must not be handled, transported or disposed of in a way that results in it being spoiled or wasted.
- It is illegal to leave decaying fish (even rough fish) in a net.
- Rough fish are defined as "burbot, catfish (except channel catfish), minnows (except common carp) and suckers (except bigmouth buffalo) as per the Manitoba Fishery Regulations, Schedule IV, Subsection 2(1) (1987).

Removal of Gear

- Fishing gear (buoys, poles) must not be left in place when not being actively fished.

Licences

- A person must be a permanent Manitoba resident to be eligible to hold a commercial fishing licence.
- The minimum age requirement for obtaining a commercial fishing licence in Manitoba is 18 years of age.
- All commercial fishers must have a valid licence before fishing.
- A Commercial Fishing Licence must be signed by the fisher, submitted to the department and paid for to be considered valid.
- Fishers must comply with all Terms (or Conditions) of the licence or attached to it (e.g. amount of gill net, species tolerances, etc.).
- There are 3 types of Commercial Fishing Licences: CF, CO, EXP:
 - CF or Commercial Fisher is the most common. CF licence holders must be present at all times that fishing is occurring. They can hire helpers to accompany them, but may not hire someone to fish on their behalf.

- CO or Commercial Operator is much less common. A CO licence holder can hire a specified number of Hired Men who are authorized to fish on their own. A Hired Man Form must be completed for each Hired Man. The CO licence holder must be personally involved in the fishery on a daily basis, but does not need to be present when fishing is occurring. As the Licence holder, a Commercial Operator is legally responsible for the actions of his Hired Men.
- EXP or Experimental is issued on new fisheries, or when short term changes have been made.

Licence Cancellation or Suspension

- Licences can be suspended or cancelled on the Minister's authority following any conviction under Fisheries legislation or for violating terms and conditions of a licence.
- The Commercial Net Fishing Suspension Directive was most recently revised on December 20, 2022. The Directive can be found at: https://gov.mb.ca/fish-wildlife/fish/commercial_fishing/index.html
- A hard copy is available upon request at any district or regional office.

Mesh size and length

- The minimum allowable mesh size is listed on a commercial fishing licence. It is measured by stretching a mesh and measuring the distance between two opposite knots in millimetres. A maximum mesh size may also be specified as a Licence Condition.
- The fisher is responsible for checking mesh size. Even if nets were ordered at a specific mesh size, the fisher is responsible for ensuring that they are in fact the legal mesh.

Seasons

- Season opening and closing dates are listed on a commercial fishing licence.
- Unless specified differently, as a condition of licence, a season opens at 12:01 AM of the opening day. Nets may not be set before this time.

- Winter fishing must occur through a hole in the ice. Fishing in areas of open water is not allowed, even if the winter season has started.

Quotas

- All quotas are converted to round weight kilograms. Marketed weights must be converted to round weights using the conversion factors included at the end of this Guide.
- The species included in the quota are listed on the licence. Any other allowable species (normally anything but Lake Sturgeon, Brook Trout and Channel Catfish) can be caught without limit and does not count against the quota.
- All caught live Lake Sturgeon must be immediately released and all dead Lake Sturgeon must be submitted to the nearest Regional or District Office.
- The Department of Natural Resources and Indigenous Futures is responsible for advising fishers on lakes with open area quota when the quota is reached and that the fishery is being closed. Typically, fishers are advised by notices posted at landing areas or packing sheds.
- The individual fisher is responsible for ensuring that they do not exceed the quota for lakes with individual quotas, including lake quotas with only one fisher. This includes responsibility for converting catches to round weight.
- Uncaught quota cannot be carried over to the next fishing year. However, quota remaining after the open water season may often be carried over into the following winter season, subject to individual fisheries management plans.

Selling Fish

- All fish caught commercially must be sold to a licenced Fish Dealer, with the following exceptions:
 - Fishers may sell their fish directly to a final consumer or fur farmer (not a store or restaurant).
 - Fishers selling their fish to a final consumer or fur farmer must give the purchaser a copy of the Trade Record.
 - Fishers may appoint an immediate family member of the fisher to sell fish on their

behalf if the fish is sold from the fisher's residence or place of business. Immediate family member means a spouse, common-law partner, parent, child or sibling of a fisher.

- Fishers may sell their fish to stores or restaurants under the authority of a Fish Dealer's Licence, issued by the Department of Natural Resources and Indigenous Futures.

Reporting Production

- The production of all fish caught commercially must be reported. Any fish sold through a Fish Dealer must be reported on a Fish Purchase Record (FPR). Fishers are responsible for ensuring that production is reported for the correct lake (check the FPR). Commercial Fishers must sign a copy of the FPR.
- Fish must be reported under the name of the Licence holder and fisher number. Although arrangements can be made with a fish dealer to have Hired Men paid for fish they deliver, the production must still be reported under the name of the Commercial Fishing Licence holder.
- Fishers selling directly to final consumers or a fur farmer are responsible for reporting their own production using Trade Records.
- Copies of used Trade Records must be submitted within one week of the end of each month to the Director of Fisheries Branch.
- Fishers must retain a copy of the Trade Record for two years after it was issued.
- All unused Trade Records must be returned no later than April 7, 2026.
- Trade Records can be obtained from the local Regional or District Office.
- Every fisher who holds unsold or undeclared fish at the end of the season authorized by the person's commercial fishing licence shall submit a season-end declaration within one week of the end of that season to the Director of Fisheries Branch.

Fish Dealers

- Commercial Fishers who become a Licenced Fish Dealer for the purpose of selling their catch to the end consumer, stores and restaurants within Manitoba, must use a

Commercial Fishers Trade Record. All Trade Record regulations must be followed.

- Commercial Fishers or Fish Dealers who are purchasing fish from commercial fishers or exporting fish outside of Manitoba, must use FPRs, sales receipts, and export receipts and follow all reporting requirements laid out in the Fish Marketing Regulations.

Fish Transportation Load Slips

- All fish being transported off the lake it was caught on must be accounted for on a Fish Transportation Loadslip unless it is otherwise exempt.
- Fish being transported by a licenced Commercial Fisher directly from the landing point to the receiving point indicated on their Commercial Fishing Licence is exempt from requiring a Fish Transportation Loadslip.
- A licenced Hired Man working for a Commercial Operator requires a Fish Transportation Loadslip for all fish being transported, but is authorized to sign the Loadslip (the Commercial Operator does not need to sign it).
- Anyone else transporting fish requires a Fish Transportation Loadslip that must be signed by the licenced Commercial Fisher.
- A copy of the completed Fish Transportation Loadslip must be left with the person to whom the fish was delivered.
- Copies of completed Fish Transportation Loadslips must be submitted within one week of the end of each month to the Director of Fisheries Branch.
- Fishers must retain a copy of a Fish Transportation Loadslip for two years after it was prepared.
- All unused Fish Transportation Loadslips must be returned no later than April 7, 2026.
- Fish Transportation Loadslips can be obtained from the local Regional or District Office.

Quota Transfers

Fishers do not own quota or a Commercial Fishing licence. The ability to transfer a quota or licence from

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one fisher to another varies across the province. On fisheries with Quota Entitlements (QE), fishers are considered to own access rights for a period of five years into the future as is indicated on the QE form. The Manitoba government is the final authority on whether or not a transfer is approved. Contact your Regional Fisheries Manager for further details on the process for your fishery.

Special Circumstances

- A fisher must actively participate in all fishing authorized by their licence; however, in the event of illness or other special circumstances, a fisher can contact the local Regional or District Office and receive permission for someone else to fish their licence temporarily. The Office must be contacted prior to authorizing someone else to lift the nets (if the office is not open, leave a message).
- In the event that a fisher is unable to fish for a longer period of time, a temporary transfer of the

Licence may be made for a period not exceeding two years. This is only intended to accommodate illness or disability. If the fisher is still unable to return to fishing after two years, the quota or licence must be transferred.

- In the event that nets freeze in, fishers should contact their local Regional or District Office and advise them that the nets are frozen in. Fishers are responsible for taking all steps possible to recover the nets.
- In the event of mechanical breakdown, fishers **MUST** contact the local Regional or District Office and advise them that they have a problem. Fishers are responsible for making alternative arrangements to lift their nets and ensure that fish are not wasted.
- Fishers cannot fish another fishers licence or quota without written approval from Fisheries Branch.

Conversion Factors to Determine Round Weight

Quotas are set in round weight. It is the responsibility of the fisher to convert marketed weight to round weight by multiplying marketed weight by the appropriate conversion factor.

Species	Dressed	Headless	Fillets
Walleye	1.1	1.4	2.4
Sauger	1.1	1.4	2.4
Pike	1.2	1.5	2.5
Trout	1.2	1.5	2.5
Whitefish	1.1	1.2	2.2

NOTE: As of November 2015 provincial Aquatic Invasive Species legislation has come into effect. There are requirements under this legislation which apply to commercial fishing activities. The legislation can be found at: <http://web2.gov.mb.ca/laws/regs/current/pdf-regs.php?reg=173/2015>

Natural Resources and Indigenous Futures

Regional & District Offices

CENTRAL REGION

Regional Office:

Gimli – Box 6000, R0C 1B0 (642-6097)

District Offices:

Ashern – Box 410, R0C 0E0 (204-768-2368)
Grand Beach – Box 220, R0E 0T0 (204-754-5040)
Gypsumville – Box 9, R0C 1J0 (204-659-5208)
Hodgson – Box 119, R0C 1N0 (204-372-6296)
Lundar – Box 10, R0C 1Y0 (204-762-5229)
Manitou – Box 10, R0G 1G0 (204-242-2950)
Portage la Prairie–25 Tupper St. N, R1N 3K1 (204-239-3204)
Riverton – Box 70, R0C 2R0 (204-378-2261)
Selkirk - #1 Keystone Dr., R1A 2H5 (204-785-5080)

Winnipeg – 14 Fultz Blvd., R3Y 0L6 (204-945-7273)

NORTHEAST REGION

Regional Office:

Thompson – Box 28, 59 Elizabeth Dr., R8N 1X4 (204- 677-6648)

District Offices:

Churchill – Box 760, R0B 0E0 (204-675-8897)
Gillam – Box 429, R0B 0L0 (204-652-2273)
Gods Lake Narrows – R0B 0M0 (204-335-2366)
Island Lake – Box 69, Stevenson Is., R0B 2H0 (204-456-2362)
Leaf Rapids – Box 430, R0B 1W0 (204-473-8133)
Lynn Lake – Box 239, R0B 0W0 (204-356-2413)
Norway House – Box 100, R0B 1B0 (204-359-6877)
Thompson - Box 28, 59 Elizabeth Dr., R8N 1X4 (204-677-6653)
Wabowden – Box 40, R0B 1S0 (204-689-2688)

NORTHWEST REGION

Regional Office:

The Pas – Box 2550, 3rd St., & Ross Ave., R9A 1M4 (204-627-8215)

District Offices:

Cranberry Portage – Box 130, R0B 0H0 (204-472-3331)
Flin Flon – 203-143 Main St., R8A 1K2 (204-687-1640)
Grand Rapids – Box 322, R0C 1E0 (204-639-2241)
Snow Lake – Box 339, R0B 1M0 (204-358-2521)
The Pas - Box 2550, 3rd St., & Ross Ave., R9A 1M4 (204-627-8287)

EASTERN REGION

Regional Office:

Lac du Bonnet – Box 4000, R0E 1A0 (345-1444)

District Offices:

Beausejour – Box 50, 20 1st St. S. R0E 0C0 (204-268-6184)
Falcon Lake – Box 40, R0E 0N0 (204-349-2201)
Lac du Bonnet – Box 850, R0E 1A0 (204-345-1400)
Lake Wpg East – Box 850, Lac du Bonnet, R0E 1A0 (204-345-1407)
Pine Falls – Box 389, R0E 1M0 (204-367-6130)
Rennie – Box 130, R0E 1R0 (204-369-3153)
Seven Sisters – Box 9, R0E 1Y0 (204-348-4004)
Sprague – Box 70, R0A 1Z0 (204-437-2348)
Steinbach – Unit B–284 Reimer Ave., R5G 0R5 (204-346-6110)

WESTERN REGION

Regional Office:

Brandon – Box 13, 1129 Queens Ave., R7A 1L9 (204-726-6441)

District Offices:

Boissevain – Box 820, R0K 0E0 (204-534-2028)
Carberry – Box 900, R0K 0H0 (204-834-8800)
Dauphin – Box 10, 27-2nd Ave., SW, R7N 3E5 (204-622-2106)
Neepawa – Box 1089, R0J 1H0 (204-476-2076)
Roblin/Grandview – Box 849, Roblin, R0L 1P0 (204-937-6452)
Shoal Lake – Box 416, R0J 1Z0 (204-759-4080)
Swan River – Box 640, R0L 1Z0 (204-734-3429)
Virden – Box 1360, R0M 2C0 (204-748-4240)
Winnipegosis – Box 366, R0L 2G0 (204-656-7030)