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**ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA
SEAFOOD (LIVE LOBSTER) STANDARDS
ARRANGEMENT OF STANDARDS**

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**SEAFOOD STANDARDS
ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA**

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS
[2004, No.]

**The Seafood (Live Lobster) Standards, [2004], made by the Minister under Regulation 3
of the Seafood Regulations, [2004]**

PART I – PRELIMINARY

Short title

1. These Standards may be cited as the Live Lobster Standards.

Interpretation

2. In these Standards –

“Regulations” means The Fisheries (Seafood) Regulations, [2004].

“live lobster” means lobster of the species *Panulirus argus*, which has not been prepared.

“approved storage area” refers to water approved by the Chief Fisheries Officer for storage of live lobster and whose Log mean count of faecal coliform is less than 200/100 ml for not less than five (5) samples taken over not more than 30 days (90% of the total samples during the 30 days period must be less than 400/100 ml).

General

3. The handling of live lobster shall be in compliance with all relevant provisions of Parts V to VIII of the Regulations and with the particular requirements of these Standards

PART II – HANDLING OF LIVE LOBSTER

General conditions

4. 1) Lobsters shall be kept alive and in good condition at all times. They shall not be dropped, thrown or roughly poured from the traps/pots/crawls. Rough and careless handling can result in injury which will weaken the lobster and reduce its survival rate. When lobsters are moved they should be carefully picked up by the back of the body shell to minimize damage. Crawls used to store lobsters should not be dropped into the water, but lowered by rope.

2) Lobsters can be held for short periods in air in clean open weave bags. Slime and mud in the weave of the bag will cause rapid suffocation of the lobsters. The use of clean Hessian or jute bags (burlap) is preferred. Lobsters shall not be held in air longer than 24 hours.

3) Lobsters shall be handled as little as possible with transfer from one container to another kept to a minimum. Excessive handling increases the chances of injury, which will weaken them.

4) Lobsters shall not be exposed to strong sunlight, wind, rain, high temperatures, fresh water or toxic substances. Exposure to strong sunlight will cause rapid drying of the gills leading to suffocation. A temperature of between 4-10°C (39-50°F) is recommended. Lobsters shall be protected from fresh water and in particular drip water from melting ice.

Fishing Vessels

5. 1) If bait or fish is carried, separate containers shall be set aside for bait and fish storage and held well away from the lobster catch to avoid contamination.

2) Vessels should be equipped with brushes, scrapers and other suitable washing and disinfecting equipment. Brushes shall be kept clean, disinfected after each use and when not in use, stored in a dry state.

3) Before any lobster is taken on board, and between each haul of pots/traps, deck and all other equipment that will come in contact with the catch shall be washed down with clean seawater and brushed to remove all visible filth and debris.

4) Cleaning and disinfecting of fishing vessels shall not be carried out in the approved storage area for lobster.

5) Vessels fishing for more than a day shall –

- (a) have an appropriate stowage plan;
- (b) keep lobsters from different day's catch separate;
- (c) have holding tanks with circulating sea water or keep lobsters in crawls at approved storage areas.

Fish Processing Establishment

6. 1) Live lobster shall be packaged in licensed fish processing establishments meeting all the relevant requirements of the Regulations.

2) Premises used to pack live lobsters shall be no less than 3.7 meters x 3.7 meters (12ft. x 12 ft.).

Monitoring and control

7. All fish processing establishments used for the handling and packing of live lobsters shall be inspected by an authorized officer at least once per month for the first six (6) months after being licensed and thereafter, once every four (4) months.

Storage

8. 1) Live lobsters shall only be stored in approved storage areas and shall in no circumstances be stored in harbour water.

2) Persons storing lobsters in such areas shall collect and submit water samples in accordance with specific guidelines as outlined by the Chief Fisheries Officer and the Chief Health Inspector. The Chief Fisheries Officer shall be notified without unnecessary delay of any unacceptable microbiological level obtained from storage area. Storage areas that have become contaminated or poses a risk to the live lobster shall be closed until the situation has been corrected.

Packaging

9. 1) Packaging materials used for live lobster shall comply with the following conditions -

- (a) All packaging materials used to transport live lobsters must be approved by the Chief Fisheries Officer for such purpose;
- (b) The packaging material used must not alter the organoleptic characteristics of the lobsters;
- (c) Lobsters shall not be transported in bags or similar containers that expose the live product to filth or physical damage;
- (d) All boxes or similar packaging materials used to export live lobsters shall be unused, clean, adequately ventilated, corrugated or waxed.

2) Lobsters shall be tightly packed and secured with tape to prevent movement and damage during transport.

Transportation

10. Transportation of live lobster shall be in compliance with the following conditions—

- (a) Live lobsters shall not be transported in the open back of pickups, trucks or any such vehicles that exposed the live animal to dust and the drying effects of the sun and wind;
- (b) Vehicles or their parts and containers used for transport of live lobsters shall be designed or refitted to maintain temperatures not exceeding 10°C (50° F) and to ensure protection against contamination by dust and the drying effects of the sun and wind;
- (c) Transport time shall be kept at a minimum. Air transport should be designed and arranged to minimize delay and avoid high temperatures;
- (d) Whenever possible, lobsters should be transported over night, when the air temperature is lower.

Marking

11. 1) In addition to the information required by regulation 29 of the Regulations all individual containers or master containers used to export live lobsters shall be labelled with –

- (a) name, complete address and approval/license number of the exporter/fish processing establishment;
- (b) batch number, content, species, net weight and date of packaging;
- (c) a warning stating “Handle with care Live Lobsters”;
- (d) a statement to keep product cool;
- (e) any other information deem necessary by the Chief Fisheries Officer from time to time.

2) Labels must be of an adequate size, clearly printed and visible.

PART III – MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

Commencement

12. These Standards shall come into force on a date to be prescribed by the Minister and published in the Gazette.