



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
National Marine Fisheries Service
NORTHEAST REGION
One Blackburn Drive
Gloucester, MA 09130-2298

JUN 27 2006

Dear Permit Holder,

This is to inform you of the method used by NOAA Office of Law Enforcement Special Agents, US Coast Guard personnel and NOAA's State Enforcement partners, in measuring net mesh.

As per 50 CFR648.104(a)(2), mesh sizes are measured by a wedge-shaped gauge having a taper of 2cm in 8cm, and a thickness of 2.3 mm, inserted into the meshes under a pressure of pull of 5 kg. The mesh size is the average of the measurement of any series of 20 consecutive meshes for nets having 75 or more meshes, and 10 consecutive meshes for nets having fewer than 75 meshes. The mesh in the regulated portion of the net is measured at least five meshes away from the lacings, running parallel to the long axis of the net.

The spade is allowed to settle by its own weight without the benefit of shaking the net or pressing on the spade to force it deeper into the mesh opening. Although there have been variations in the method used, specifically "shaking" a net to settle the spade, this method is no longer being used.

Please contact your local fisheries law enforcement office for a demonstration of the net measurement procedure, or for clarification of this rule.

Sincerely,


for Patricia A. Kurkul
Regional Administrator