

News story: New guidance for fishermen ahead of full discard ban

The final phase of the [landing obligation](#), also known as the 'discard ban', comes into force in from 1 January 2019.

The Marine Management Organisation has provided guidance for the fishing industry to help them comply and to manage challenges with quota. Under the full [discard ban](#), fishermen must retain and land all quota species; non-quota species can continue to be discarded as can any fish that may represent a health hazard.

There are also specific optional exemptions to the discard ban for some quota species and these are set out in the regulations. Prohibited species and undersized specimens of non-quota species must be discarded.

There are also a number of specific gear technical requirements being introduced in 2019. These are mandatory for some Irish Sea fisheries from 1 January 2019 and for Celtic Sea fisheries from 1 July 2019. In addition, other optional technical gears can be used if fishermen want to meet exemptions which allow fish to be discarded.

For 2019, the UK Government has worked to maintain, and in some cases extend, exemptions allowing fish with high survival rates to be discarded as well as some unwanted catches that are difficult to avoid. In addition, the MMO will continue to apply a fair and proportionate approach to enforcement.

This the final phase of the discard ban and will bring an end to the practice of throwing dead fish back into the sea. The landing obligation was initially introduced in January 2015 for certain pelagic fisheries.

Fishermen are advised to check the guidance regularly as there may be further changes to the regulations following the December Council. Guidance on the landing obligation can also be found on the [European Commission's website](#).