



Alternative Methods of Disposal

Frequently Asked Questions

What are my options for landing fish?

A commercial fisher must **only** sell or otherwise dispose of fish they land:

- to a licensed fish receiver;
- via wharf sales;
- or via an alternative method of disposal approved by the chief executive of the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI).

You must have separate approval from MPI to use any alternative method of disposal that the chief executive has approved for use.

These FAQs describe the alternative method of disposal and how to use it.

Why do we have a new method for disposing of commercially caught fish on land?

Before 2022, commercial fishers were only able to sell/dispose of their catch to a Licensed Fish Receiver (LFR) or through wharf sales.

Changes to the landing and discard rules for Quota Management System (QMS) species might result in commercial fishers returning with more catch than they are able to sell or dispose of to LFRs, or sell through wharf sales.

The Commercial Fishing Regulations have been changed and MPI can now approve on-land disposal of QMS and non-QMS catch (if landed) that commercial fishers can't sell or dispose of via LFRs or through wharf sales. The changes came into effect on 5 October 2023.

What is the new alternative method of disposal?

The chief executive has given approval for fishers to dispose of fish to a lawfully operating disposal facility. Fishers must have MPI approval before they can use the method.

We expect sale or disposal via LFRs and wharf sales to remain the main ways for commercial fishers to sell or dispose of landed catch, but this new method provides fishers with another option if needed.

Who can get an approval, and how?

What's the process for obtaining approval to use this method of disposal?

You must apply to **and receive approval** from MPI to be able to dispose of fish under the alternative method of disposal in advance of disposal.

To be eligible for approval, you must:

- hold a fishing permit, and
- not operate as an LFR.

If you are an LFR you are not eligible as you are able to dispose of unwanted fish through other means.

To apply for approval, either:

- complete the [online application](#) and submit it to MPI electronically; or
- download a [physical copy](#) of the application, fill it in, and then send it to Fisheries New Zealand by Email as a PDF to: fishdisposal@mpi.govt.nz.

How long will it take to process an approval?

Approvals take up to seven days to issue. Take this timeframe into consideration when applying for approval and put your application in, and wait for an approval, before you need to dispose of fish through the alternative method of disposal.

How long is my approval valid for?

Approvals are valid for two years during which time you do not require further approval for disposing of fish using the method.

Note that your approval will be revoked if you:

- no longer hold a fishing permit, and/or
- obtain a fish receiver licence.

Where can I dispose of fish under the approval?

The Fisheries (Alternative Methods of Disposal) Circular 2023 states that you can only dispose of commercially caught fish under the alternative method of disposal to lawfully operating disposal facilities.

“Disposal facility” is defined in [section 7](#) of the [Waste Minimisation Act 2008 – NZ Legislation](#). In broad terms, it is a facility where waste is disposed of and can include (subject to local council requirements):

- **Landfills:** In practice, this means **Class 1 Landfills**, which are specially constructed to undertake the controlled deposit onto or into land of non-hazardous, solid waste from household, commercial and/or industrial sources. They take the widest range of waste.
- **Transfer stations:** Land or other place that waste is taken to for sorting or consolidation before being taken away for treatment, processing, recycling, or disposal.
- **Resource recovery facilities:** Facilities that receive, collect, sort, store, or process waste to minimise the need for it to go to landfill, and includes facilities that repurpose organic waste to new uses.

Contact your local Council regarding information on these facilities.

A lawfully operating disposal facility is a facility that meets all legislative and council rules for that type of business to receive and process approved classes of waste.

There are 67 local councils in New Zealand. Each has their own rules about waste disposal.

- *That means you need to know what rules your local council has about the disposal of commercially caught fish, who you can use to do it for you, and where the fish can be lawfully disposed of.*

Most councils classify waste into types, such as commercial, hazardous, industrial, household (domestic), and organic waste. This determines how you may dispose of it, and where.

You are not allowed to dispose of catch under the alternative method of disposal to anywhere else other than a lawfully operating disposal facility as determined by your local council.

How do I find out what lawfully operating disposal facilities and waste collectors are in my area?

It is your responsibility to find a lawful method to dispose of the fish.

Councils typically put rubbish/recycling information on their webpages, which provides the locations, disposal restrictions and contact details for landfills, transfer stations and council-connected resource recovery facilities.

- So, as a guide, check out what information your council provides on their website.

You could also contact the disposal facilities and/or waste collectors in your area to find out if they have council approval to operate and will receive commercially caught fish as waste.

Your LFR may also have information on available disposal facilities if they use them to dispose of fish offal/remains post-processing.

Can I sell the fish to disposal facilities?

If you have approval to dispose of fish to disposal facilities, you are not permitted to sell any of that fish to any type of disposal facility.

Can I store fish pending disposal to a disposal facility or through a waste collector?

Yes. You can store fish from multiple fishing trips in a holding container [as defined in the Fisheries (Reporting) Regulations 2017] pending disposal to a disposal facility. In doing so you:

- remain responsible for the storage of that fish.
- must ensure the fish being stored is identifiable on a per-fishing trip basis;
- are subject to the fishery officer inspection powers under the Fisheries Act 1996;
- must, on a per-trip basis:
 - complete landing report requirements for storage pending disposal using the **QWM** landing code (see the E-logbook Circular 2023); and
 - make a record of the whole fish green-weight by species of the fish being stored pending disposal to approved disposal facilities.

How can I dispose of the fish to disposal facilities?

The actual disposal process can be undertaken either:

- by you or via an agent of yours (such as an employee or your LFR may take catch to be disposed of and dispose of it through their normal channels); or
- via a waste collector.

Direct disposal

When you will be disposing of the fish yourself, you must ensure that:

- you will be taking the fish to a disposal facility that accepts fish waste; and
- you will meet any disposal conditions or restrictions your council sets for that type of disposal facility (for instance, possibly needing a “special waste” permit for each disposal).

Disposal via lawfully operating waste collectors

You have the option to use a waste collector, other than your council-provided household waste collection service (where you have one), to uplift and transport your fish to a disposal facility instead of doing it yourself.

Like disposal facilities, waste collectors must meet all relevant legislative and council rules. You can check with your local council before considering who to use as your waste collector.

At the time of collection by the waste collector:

- Obtain a receipt or other business document from the waste collector that has the name and address of the service and the date of pickup.

Can I use my council-provided household waste collection service?

Whether you can do so will depend on whether council rules and requirements allow it.

- For example, many councils distinguish between “household waste” and “commercial waste”. Where they do, it is probable that you will not be able to dispose of your commercially caught fish as “household waste” using the council-provided household waste collection service.
- Even if you can, there may be restrictions on the type and volume of fish waste that can be disposed of in this manner.

You need to check with your local council about what is permitted before considering this option.

Do I need to have my approval with me when disposing of fish?

You must have a copy (which may be electronic) of the approval in your possession when disposing of fish to a disposal facility or to a waste collector, so that, if inspected by a fishery officer, you have evidence that you have MPI approval to dispose of fish to disposal facilities.

How do I report disposals under the alternative disposal method approval?

In addition to existing reporting obligations, the [Fisheries \(Reporting\) Regulations 2017](#) now require commercial fishers to:

- include in your landing report the green-weight of the fish that is put into a disposal facility using new landing codes [[regulation 11\(2\)\(ab\)](#)]; and
- record that information in the landing report no later than 15 days after disposal is complete [[regulation 11\(3\)\(ba\)](#)].

Changes have been made to the [Fisheries \(E-Logbook Users Instructions and Codes\) Circular 2023](#) to provide two new landing codes:

- **WM** for fish that is disposed of immediately using the alternative method of disposal, along with other reporting requirements for disposal via disposal facilities; and
- **QWM** for fish that is stored prior to disposal under the alternative method of disposal. This is reported on your MHR for the month when you report it, regardless of how long you actually store it before disposing of it.

What records do I keep when using a disposal facility?

In addition to existing recordkeeping obligations, [regulation 4\(e\)](#) of the [Fisheries \(Recordkeeping\) Regulations 1990](#) now require commercial fishers to keep a record of all fish and fish product put into a disposal facility including:

- the fact that a disposal facility was used;
- the date the fish were disposed of;
- the name and address of the facility at which the fish was disposed of, and any receipts received in respect of that disposal (if applicable); and
- the green-weight of the fish disposed of.

Commercial fishers must have these records for seven years for fishery officer inspection purposes.

Alternative (on land) disposal of commercial catch

You have landed catch that you are unable to sell or dispose of to a Licensed Fish Receiver or through wharf sales

Alternative method of disposal



You must have pre-approval before using the alternative method of disposal



You can find out how to apply here

Fill in an application



Approval granted



Are you disposing of the fish immediately or storing it for later disposal?

Immediate disposal



Stored



Who is disposing of the fish to the disposal facility?

Reporting: In your landing report, record the greenweight of the fish being disposed of, by species, using the code **QWM**

Decide what type of disposal facility to use



Disposal Facilities

Landfill

Resource recovery facilities

Transfer station

You (or your Waste Collector employee/agent)

Waste Collector



You must ensure they have the necessary council approvals to operate.



Get, and retain, receipt for each disposal



Reporting: In your landing report, record the greenweight of the fish disposed of, by species, using the code **WM**



You must use a lawfully operating disposal facility within the meaning of disposal facility set out in section 7 of the Waste Minimisation Act 2008