



Oregon

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August 12, 2010:

Subject: Crab Pot Release Mechanism Rule changes

Dear Oregon Ocean Commercial Dungeness Crab Permit Holders and Interested Persons;

At the August 6, 2010 Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission (OFWC) meeting the OFWC adopted two major changes to the commercial crab pot release mechanism rules (Oregon Administrative rule (OAR) 635-005-0055 (4)). The adopted rule language can be found on page 2 of this mailing and will take effect September 1, 2010 (and will be applicable during the 2010-2011 season).

First, the OFWC adopted the removal of the degradable metal hooks option as a release mechanism method (section (4)(a) of current rule). Secondly, the OFWC adopted all of the proposed changes to section (4)(c) of the current rule, to clearly define the minimum size opening and the number of times cotton can be wrapped and knotted to the mesh when utilizing wire mesh release mechanisms. Prior to these changes, the description of the minimum size of the opening did not allow the release mechanism methods commonly used by industry and that meet the biological requirements for crab to escape through the release mechanism, should the pot become derelict. With the rule changes, the description of the minimum opening now meets both objectives as follows:

The adopted changes allow, as long as all other rule specifications are met, two of the more widespread rigging methods, commonly known as the "V" and "W" methods (Figures 1 and 2 on page 3), and disallow a method never intended to be legal, commonly known as the "O" method (Figure 3 on page 3).

Thanks to all who participated in developing the modified language to better suit the needs of the fishery and its participants. Please don't hesitate to contact me or Kelly Corbett (541-867-4741) with questions or comments.

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Adopted Rule Language:

635-005-0055

Fishing Gear

It is *unlawful* for commercial purposes to:

(1) Take crab by any means other than crab rings or crab pots (ORS 509.415); a crab ring is any fishing device that allows crab unrestricted entry or exit while fishing.

(2) Possess on a vessel, use, control, or operate any crab pot which is greater than thirteen cubic feet in volume, calculated using external dimensions.

(3) Possess on a vessel, use, control, or operate any crab pot which does not include a minimum of two circular escape ports of at least 4-1/4 inches inside diameter located on the top or side of the pot. If escape ports are placed on the side of the pot, they shall be located in the upper half of the pot.

(4) Possess on a vessel, use, control, or operate any crab pot which does not have a release mechanism. Acceptable release mechanisms are:

(a) ~~Iron lid strap hooks constructed of iron or "mild" steel rod (not stainless steel) not to exceed 1/4 inch (6 mm) in diameter;~~

~~(b) A single loop of untreated cotton [or other natural fiber twine, or other twine approved by the Department] not heavier than 120 thread size between pot lid tiedown hooks and the tiedown straps;~~
or

~~(b)(c)~~ Any modification of the wire mesh on the top or **upper half of the** side of the pot, secured with a single strand of ~~[120 thread size] untreated cotton~~ **not heavier than 120 thread size**, ~~[natural fiber, or other twine approved by the Department]~~ which, when removed, will create a minimum~~[an]~~ opening of at least **5**~~[five]~~ inches in diameter **and will meet the following**~~[-]:~~

(A) The minimum opening may have not more than a single wire mesh (described as a "V") that protrudes into the opening provided that mesh extends into the opening a distance of not more than 2.5 inches, as measured from the perimeter of the opening along either edge of the protruding wire mesh, to serve as an anchor for the securing cotton. The panel containing the opening and the wire mesh acting as an anchor for the securing cotton must be constructed of a single wire no greater than 0.050 inches in diameter.

(B) Cotton must not be wrapped multiple times around wire mesh and may use no more than one knot securing the wire mesh at each end.

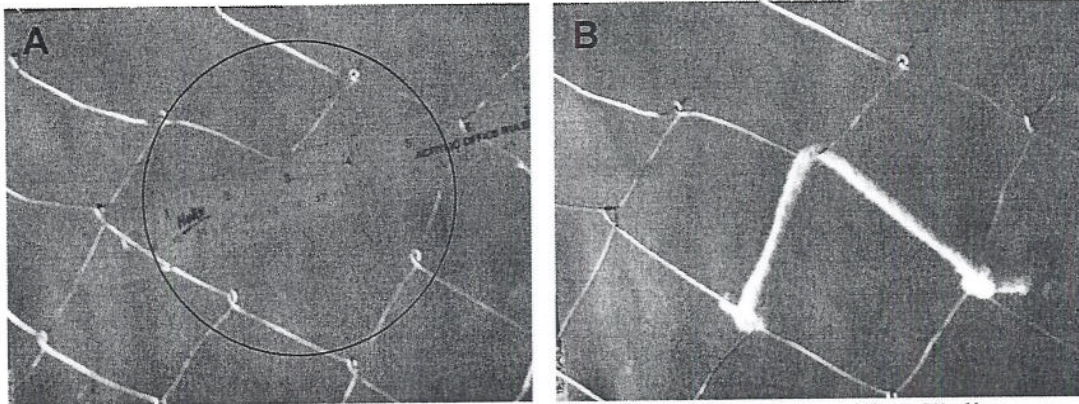


Figure 1. Photograph of the 'V' release mechanism. (A) untied, with a 5" diameter circle imposed on it; and (B) tied closed with cotton. This method would be allowed, as long as all other rule specifications are met, by the new language.

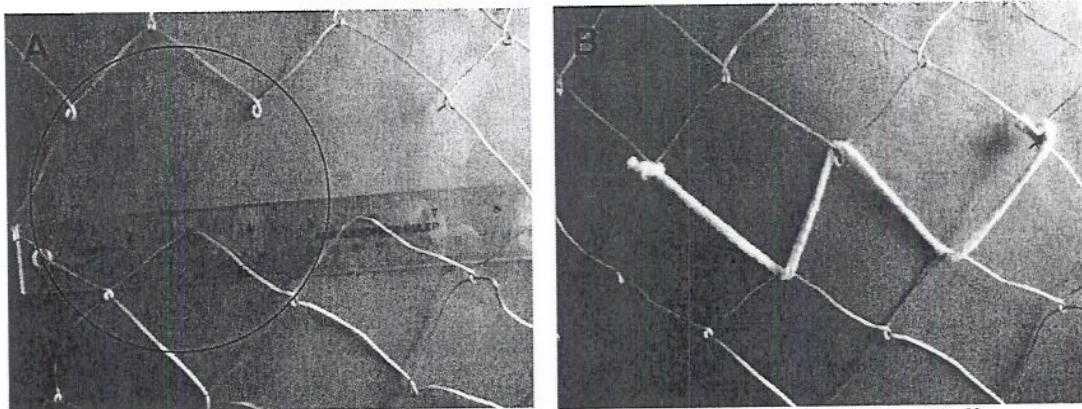


Figure 2. Photograph of the 'W' release mechanism. (A) untied, with a 5" diameter circle imposed on it; and (B) tied closed with cotton. This method would be allowed, as long as all other rule specifications are met, by the new language.

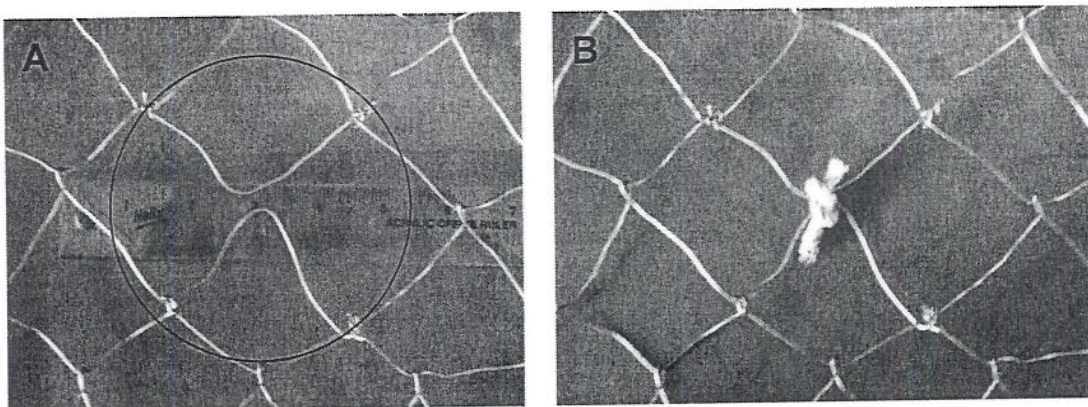


Figure 3. Photograph of the 'O' release mechanism. (A) untied, with a 5" diameter circle imposed on it; and (B) tied closed with cotton. This method would **NOT** be allowed by the new language.