



PACIFIC STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION

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West Coast Observer RFP

Q&A

8/4/17

1. Q: Please confirm that employees who are injured while performing duties as an observer as described in section 2.2 Scope of Work, may be eligible for compensation under the Federal Employee's Compensation Act.

A: Although FECA is primarily intended for federal employees, a 1996 amendment to the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act extended the provisions of FECA to observers, as follows (section 403(c)):

"An observer on a vessel and under contract to carry out responsibilities under this Act or the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 (16 USC 1361 et seq.) shall be deemed to be a Federal employee for purposes of compensation under the Federal Employee Compensation Act (5 USC 8101 et seq.)."

Please visit <https://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/observer-home/observerresources/observerresourcesinfo/feca> for more information.

2. Q: How will work performed on the contract be billed? e.g. per hour of direct labor plus materials, firm fixed price based on a unit such as sea day?

A: *PSMFC expects this contract to be set up as a cost reimbursable contract with the units to be spelled out in the proposal.*

3. Q: On average how many hours per day Monday-Friday does each trainee spend engaged in work during the initial 15 day training? How many hours of homework are assigned to each trainee on average each weekend during the 15 day training?

A: Training typically runs for 8 hours per day, some days may run longer and some shorter. For example, fish ID training labs will allow extra time for trainees to master their skills. Some trainees will not need this extra time, others will. Homework assignments are variable and the time to complete them is dependent on the trainee. There are roughly 9 written homework assignments that take roughly 15 hours to complete. There are also daily reading assignments as well.

4. Q: How many days have observers spent in briefing each of the last four years?

A: All observer complete a 4-day briefing every year to review safety protocols, perform safety skills and drills, and receive updated sampling protocols.

5. Q: On average how many hours are spent working per observer each day when working at sea?

A: This is highly variable and dependent on the vessel, fishery, area, etc. Observers should be prepared to work up to 2-16 hours a day when at sea.

6. Q Can you provide a table showing the number of sea days completed by month for each of the last four years for this program?

A: **Sea Days per month 2013-2016**

Year	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	Total
2013	53	43	80	108	224	189	163	170	169	163	59	29	1450
2014	50	58	6	208	233	254	200	233	172	122	58	16	1610
2015	80	41	44	221	407	394	337	355	306	263	35	10	2493
2016	29	62	45	177	364	350	361	506	416	239	18	38	2605
Total	212	204	175	714	1228	1187	1061	1264	1063	787	170	93	8158

7. Q: On average how many hours are spent per observer each day when working on land performing duties described in 2.2 part d of the scope of work?

A: This is highly variable. In general, observers should be prepared to work 40 hours per week when not deployed. Travel or other circumstances may require additional hours to some weeks.

8. Q: How many debriefing days have there been each year for the last four years?

A: **Debriefings 2013-2016***

YEAR	# of Debriefings
2013	71
2014	70
2015	107
2016	103

*Total number of debriefings that took place. Some debriefings could have taken more than 1 day, but most were completed in 1 day.

9. Q: On average how many hours does an observer spend working each debriefing day?

A: Debriefings include in person meetings, phone calls, data corrections etc. Debriefing time is dependent upon data quality and observer documentation of sampling protocols. Debriefing days can be from 1-8 hours in length.

10. Q: Page 7 part i. Lead Observers indicates that lead observers are expected to function as regular observers with added shore side duties. Please describe the added shore duties. How many days per year are Lead Observers engaged in the added shore side duties? On average how many hours per day do lead Observers spend engaged in the added shore side duties?

A: Lead observers should be available to perform added shoreside duties when they are necessary. This could include prior to, during and after a deployed day.

Examples of lead duties include but are not limited to:

Performing vessel inspections

Issuing waivers to vessels

Assisting seasonal and year round observers

Performing dock rounds

Making selection calls to vessel owners and/or captains

Photographing vessels

Answering questions from fishermen

Other duties as assigned by program staff

11. Q: During times of lightened sea duties please describe the work Lead Observers perform to assist the program meet its goals. Where is the work performed? How many days do Lead Observers spend performing these duties per year? On average how many hours per day are spent by each Lead Observer performing these tasks?

A: Lead observers work out of their residences, at the docks, at program offices, etc. The number of days lead observer duties are needed is highly variable and in relation to the vessels selected for coverage, weather, observer needs, program needs, safety issues, etc. Lead observers should be prepared to perform these duties for up to 40 hours per week.

12. Q: How many observers attended three week trainings for this program each of the last four years?

A: **Three Week Trainings 2013-2016**

Year	Three Week Training Trainees
2016	12
2015	10
2014	5
2013	0

13. Q: How many observers attended 4-day briefings for this program each of the last four years?

A: **4-Day Briefings 2013-2016**

Year	4-Day Briefing Attendees
2016	16
2015	16
2014	16
2013	22

14. Q: In order to develop a quality control plan can you identify what information is made available to the contractor by PSMFC and NOAA Fisheries regarding observer data quality and performance?

A: Debriefings include evaluations that are available to providers. When observers are not performing well providers are notified as part of the process of working with the observer to improve data quality.

15. Q: Is there a form that is used to evaluate the quality of an observer's data following each debriefing? If there is such a form can you please provide an example of the evaluation?

A:

Scale calibration weight & FIT values consistently recorded, according to protocol.	
Trawl Only – Biological sampling list documented on all hauls.	
Trawl Only- Raw data not transcribed and all appropriate data documented.	
All fish ticket numbers documented.	
Database Entry	Comment
All trips entered within 3 days of disembarking.	
No/minimal database entry errors.	
Database entry completed for all trips.	
Clean Trip Error Reports.	
First trip of each month entered via offline database.	
Calculations	Comment
All calculations clearly documented.	
Correct formulas always used.	
No/minimal calculation errors.	
Observer Logbook	Comment
List of Vessels thoroughly completed.	
Vessel Safety Checklists appropriately completed.	
Observer Safety Survey completed for each vessel.	
Equipment Test Checklist completed.	
All vessels properly diagramed.	
Net type documented (Trawl only).	
Net and Trawl Alley/Hopper Capacity documented.	
Daily notes thoroughly written for each observed day.	
Species ID	Comment
Completed forms for all priority rockfish, Pacific Halibut, and all other prohibited/protected species, at first encounter.	
All forms thoroughly completed, including photos for all IFQ, protected, and prohibited species.	
Number of Species ID forms not accepted.	
Met Species ID form completion rate for period. Requirement: 5 per trip, until all IFQ/Protected/Prohibited species completed, then maintain 85% completion rate for NIFQ species.	
Communication/Attitude/Reliability	Comment
Observer maintained good lines of communication with debriefer.	
Observer has positive attitude and interactions with debriefer.	
Data submitted on or before the data deadline(s).	
Observer completed program exit survey.	
Requirements for Return (Exit/Year-end only) (If within 12 months of last deployment)	Comment
What additional training will be required?	
Will a debriefing be required after the first 3 non-Hake trips?	

Summary

Requirements for return (Exit/Year-end only):

If the observer performed satisfactorily, with no major issues, then include the following statement:

If this observer returns to the WCGOP within 12 months of the date of their last debriefing, an annual briefing is required. If upon returning to the WCGOP it has been more than 12 months since the date of their last debriefing, a full training is required.

If the observer did NOT perform satisfactorily, then include the following statement:

If this observer returns to the WCGOP, they must submit their first 3 non-whiting trips for review and attend an initial deployment debriefing. If performance is shown to be unsatisfactory, no further deployment will be permitted.

OR

If this observer would like to return to the WCGOP they will be required to repeat a full training, regardless of the date of return.

16. Q: How many times last year did an observer sail from one port group and return to a different port group?

A: The number of trips where an observer returned to a port that was not the same as the port of departure is listed below:

YEAR	NCS TRIPS LANDED IN DIFFERENT PORT
2013	20
2014	31
2015	39
2016	59

17. Q: On average how many hours are spent per observer completing data entry following each trip?

A: This is variable and related to the type of trip and the individual observer. WCGOP trips range from several hours to two weeks. Average trip length is 3-4 days. Observers are provided with equipment to enter data at sea and upload to our database when they return to port. Individual observers manage this process differently.

18. Q: Would it be possible to reduce the automobile coverage requirement to \$500,000 or could the rationale behind the \$1,000,000 requirement?

A: No.

19. Q: Please verify that the GS-5 Step 1 is the lowest level of required compensation for observer labor and not the 04/17/2017 revised U.S. Department of Labor Wage Determination No. 2004-0287,

Revision No. 22, which establishes a nationwide minimum hourly rate of \$15.74 for Fishery Observer I.

A: GS 5 Step 1 RUS has an hourly rate of \$15.74. Please refer to https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/salary-tables/pdf/2017/RUS_h.pdf