



State of Washington  
Department of Fish and Wildlife

48 Devonshire Road, Montesano, Washington 98563-9618 (360) 249-4628 FAX (360) 249-1229

July 1, 2025

## WASHINGTON COASTAL DUNGENESS CRAB INDUSTRY NOTICE

### New Line & Gear Requirements: Effective December 1, 2025

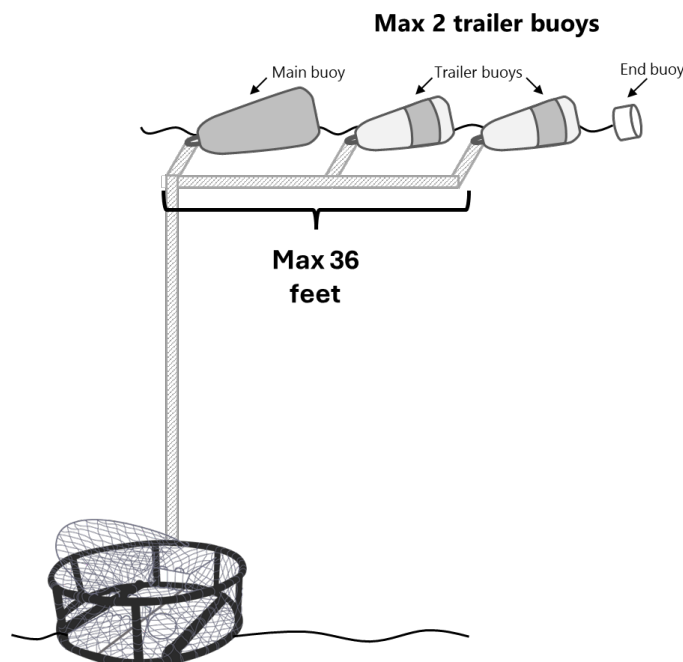
On April 4, 2025, the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission approved the adoption of new rules that change the **line marking** and **surface gear requirements** for gear used within the WA coastal Dungeness crab fishery. New rules are required beginning December 1, 2025, and will apply to the 2025-26 season; new rules do not impact vessels currently participating in the 2024-25 season. A complete description of rule changes can be found at this link: <https://wdfw.wa.gov/about/regulations/adopted/2025/commercial-dungeness-crab>

### WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

#### Surface Gear Limitations:

Beginning **December 1, 2025**, surface gear used in the Washington coastal Dungeness crab fishery is **limited to 36 feet total**. Surface gear may include no more than two trailer buoys and one main diver buoy. One end marker buoy is allowed if it is under 5 inches in diameter and does not extend more than 3 feet beyond the last trailer buoy.

Vessel operators who can show that these limits create a safety risk may apply for a permit exemption to the 36-foot length restriction before fishing begins. Information on how to apply for a permit will be available before to the start of the 2025-2026 fishing season.



## **Comprehensive Line Marking:**

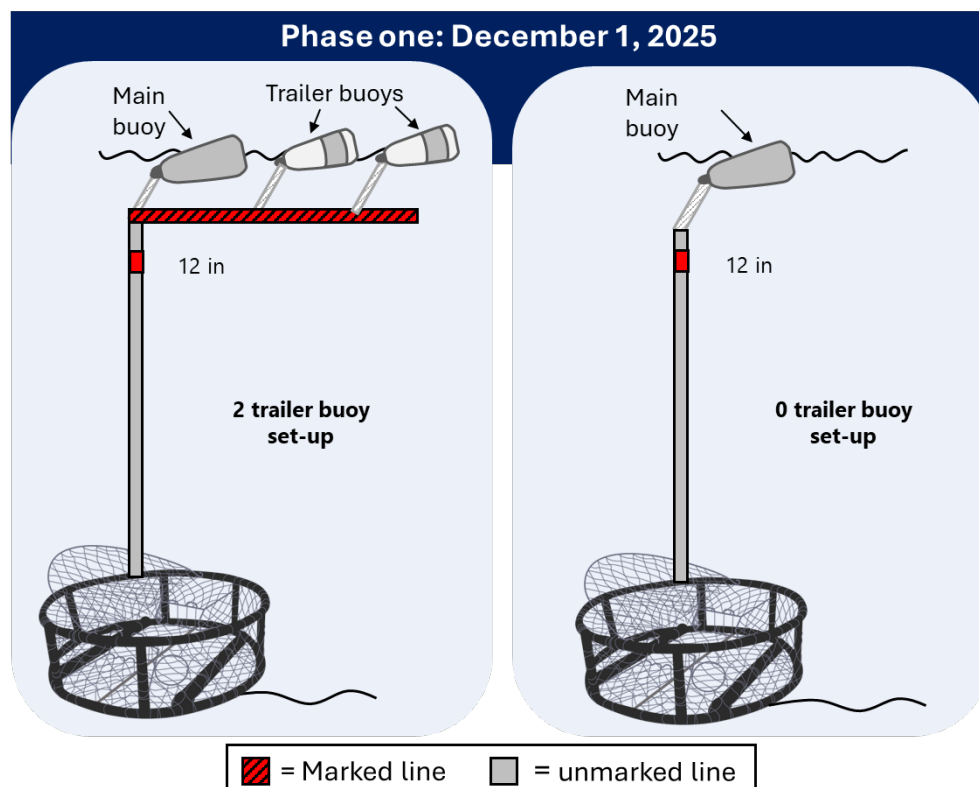
Beginning December 1, 2025, line used in the Washington coastal Dungeness crab fishery must follow the fishery's new red and black marking rules. Line markings must be unique to the fishery, which means the fisheries markings cannot be used in other fisheries within WA state (including Puget Sound crab) and markings required in other state or federal fisheries (such as Oregon crab) cannot be used in the WA coastal crab fishery.

Marking requirements can be met by using red and black line made for the Washington coastal fishery or by adding sets of solid red and black marks. The WDFW has created a guide to help understand the new line marking requirements. The [compliance guide](https://wdfw.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2025-06/compliance-guide-line-marking-v1-1.pdf) is available online on the Coastal Commercial Dungeness crab fishery rules and regulations webpage: <https://wdfw.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2025-06/compliance-guide-line-marking-v1-1.pdf>. Reference the compliance guide and [WAC 220-340-430](#) for more information.

The new line marking requirements are being implemented in two steps, the first phase of requirements go into effect before the 2025-2026 season and the second phase of requirements go into effect before the 2028-2029 season.

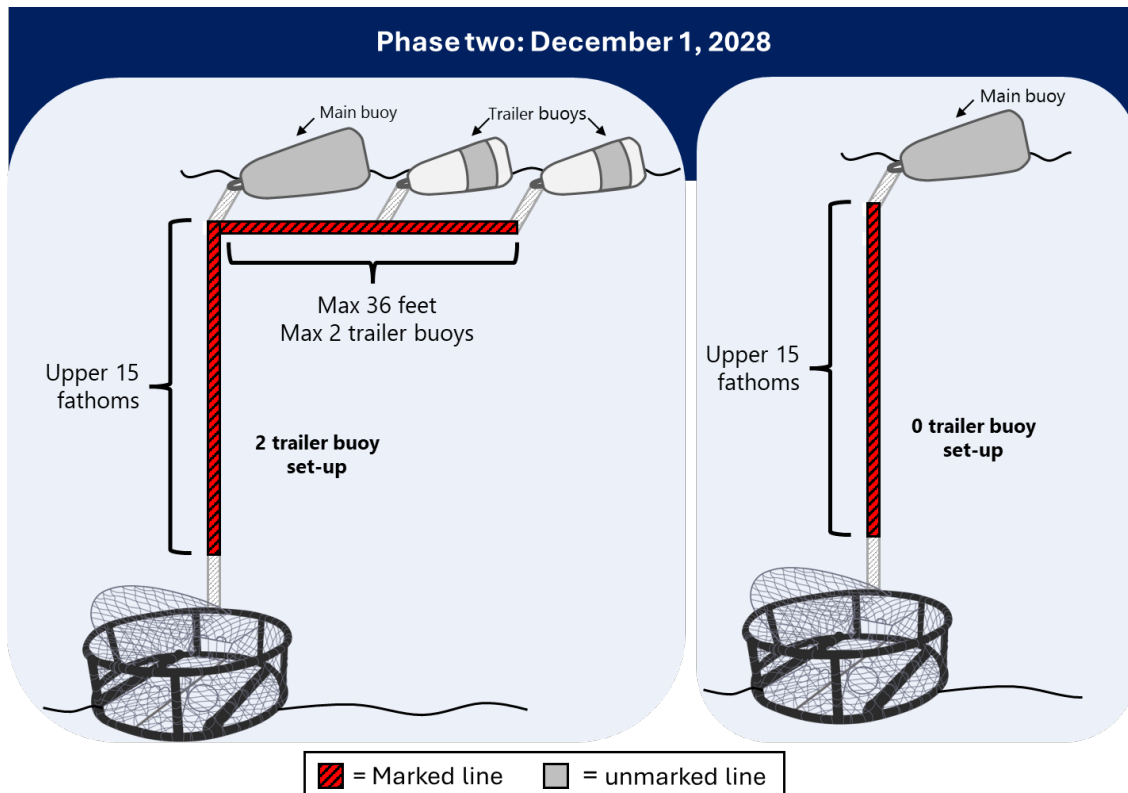
### **Phase One: Effective December 1, 2025**

- All surface line (a.k.a. trailer line) must be marked exclusive to the fishery with red and black.
- The 12-inch continuous red mark within one fathom of the main diver buoy on the main vertical line rule is still required. The use of state-fishery specific made line within the top fathom of main vertical line also meets this requirement.
- The 12-inch red mark within one fathom of the crab pot is no longer required.
- Surface gear limitations go into effect.



**Phase Two: Effective December 1, 2028**

- The top 15 fathoms of line connecting each crab pot to the main buoy must be marked exclusive to the fishery with red and black.
- When fishing with less than 20 fathoms of line, the top 50% of the line must be marked.
- Surface line marking from phase one is still required



**WDFW STAFF ARE HERE TO HELP**

WDFW staff, as well as our partners, are available to assist during this transition. For any questions please contact:

Matt George  
Coastal Shellfish Manager  
48 Devonshire Rd, Montesano WA 98563  
Phone: 360-640-1066  
Email: [Matthew.George@dfw.wa.gov](mailto:Matthew.George@dfw.wa.gov)

Megan Hintz  
Coastal Marine Fisheries Whale  
Entanglement Coordinator  
Phone: 564-215-1757  
Email: [Megan.Hintz@dfw.wa.gov](mailto:Megan.Hintz@dfw.wa.gov)