



Removal and Movement of Fish Mortalities

Purpose

To ensure the correct Biosecurity steps are taken during the removal and disposal of morts. Includes equipment used for transferring morts to a shared mortality collection point where applicable.

Scope

This procedure will cover the removal, transfer and disposal of morts from a site to its shorebase, and the removal and disposal of morts to a shared mortality collection point (i.e. a shorebase not routinely used by the farm). Applies to all SSC sites (freshwater, broodstock and marine)

Responsibility and Authority

Site managers, Production Managers, Staff, Biology Dept, Environmental Dept.

Procedure

It is vital to ensure that all staff are familiar with the Code of Good practice and that biosecurity measures are met. Maximal biosecurity measures should be implemented whilst removing mortalities to reduce environmental impacts, the risk of cross contamination and any impact to the health of remaining fish. PPE used for mortality removal should be restricted to a designated area where appropriate, and strict hygiene policy adhered to at all times. Any failings in biosecurity should be reported and recorded as per company procedure (BIO.SOP.49 Reporting suspected and real breaches of biosecurity & welfare).

Before removing dead fish, ensure site specific PPE is available and staff are aware of the risks involved. All equipment used should be clean and be in good working order. Only trained staff are to use specialised equipment. Where contracted external staff are to be used in mortality removal, they should also receive appropriate training, and an SSC member of staff should be available to supervise the operations, ensuring that good hygiene practices are maintained throughout.

Virkon disinfectant is to be mixed with freshwater, to a strength of 1% (75g of product with 10L of freshwater). The mixture will be pink in colouration. Once the disinfectant loses its pink colouration or has a smell of bleach, the solution must be changed, as it is no longer effective. If moving to/from a site with a known pathogen, additional biosecurity measures may need to be implemented and a risk assessment performed for the movement of mortalities. These will be communicated to the vessel crew ahead of movements by SSC site managers/biology.

Prior to Loading

- Before the mortality removal vessel enters a new management area, the deck of the vessel is to be cleared of all organic debris (weed, mussels, bait, etc.), and the deck is to be thoroughly sprayed with Virkon (or other suitable broad spectrum disinfectant).
- Mort bins should be visually inspected for damage and sprayed with Virkon
 - Bins with holes or visible damage should not be used
 - All bins must have a securable lid
- Only designated mort bins should be used for fallen stock to minimise the risk of contamination when performing other tasks.
- Adequate numbers of bins should be available to minimise the risk of over filling and/or not having sufficient capacity to remove all carcasses.

During Loading

- Before removing mortality ensure that brail net is positioned and secured directly below lift up outlet pipe.
 - Where hard top pipes are in place, the brailer net can be tied/secured to the uplift pipe
 - Where soft/flexible pipe is used, the brailer net must be tied to the handrail to reduce the risk of brail net falling from the pipe



- When net has been appropriately filled all lifting must be over the mid ship of the vessel and not over the bow to eliminate lifting over open water.
- The brail net fully filled should not exceed the capacity of the mortality bin.
- Ensure brail net is positioned over harvest bin for discharge
 - Cod end system ensures that all mortalities are dropped directly into tub below
 - Cod end must not be discharged until brail net is in position, and crane has stopped moving
- Ensure all fallen stock is carefully placed into mort bins and no stock falls outside the bin onto the vessel deck.
 - In event that any carcasses fall outwith the bin, immediate recovery must take place
- Once the mort bin is filled, a lid is placed on the bin and securely fastened. The outside of the bin and the vessel deck will be thoroughly sprayed with Virkon (or other suitable broad spectrum disinfectant).
- Mort bins should never be overfilled and there should be no leaks.

After Loading

- All equipment used during the removal and disposal of mortalities should be cleaned and disinfected after use.
- Disinfection records must be maintained and presented upon request.

When unloading mort bins at the shorebase, the same biosecurity measures should be adhered to. Bins should be checked for leaks before unloading starts, and all bins should be unloaded into a designated area, which should be adequately separated from other working areas of the shorebase. Ideally bunding should be in place to minimise the risk of spill. Site specific PPE should be worn in this area, and access restricted where additional biosecurity measures are in place for disease control. Bins should remain closed and contained until either carefully emptied into a closed skip or directly uplifted by an external mortality removal company (see VHWP Part 2 & 3). Once morts are collected, all bins should be cleaned and disinfected before being moved to any other site for mort collection. Records should be kept of disinfection.

References

- SEA.SOP.3 Event Mortality Procedure
- SEA.REF.8 Uplift Manual
- SEA.REF.10 Mort Removal Equipment Risk Assessment
- BIO.SOP.49 Reporting suspected and real breaches of biosecurity & welfare
- Code of Good Practice Chapter 4
- Marine Safe Working Practise
- COSHH