

Chesapeake Bay Early Start Time for Crab Pot Fishermen Enrolled in FACTS

Frequently Asked Questions:

- **Why is the department allowing crab pot fishermen the option to start their work day early?**
Allowing crab pot fishermen to start up to 2 hours before sunrise helps them complete a majority of the work day in the early morning hours when air temperatures are cooler. This helps to reduce the number of crabs that die before they make it to market and helps to protect the fishermen's health.
- **Who can use this flexibility?**
Crab pot fishermen who are signed up to use our daily electronic reporting system (FACTS) when they are crab potting in the Chesapeake Bay.
- **What does this flexibility allow?**
To start harvesting from crab pots in the Chesapeake Bay up to 2 hours before sunrise.
- **When is this flexibility available?**
During the crabbing season, April 1 - December 15.
- **How do I use this flexibility?**
At the beginning of each work day you will indicate in the electronic reporting system that you would like to start early.
- **Do I have to start early for the entire summer?**
No, you will be able to decide if you want to start early each day.
- **I like working during the regular work hours as they are now. Am I being required to start 2 hours early?**
No, this flexibility is not mandatory. If you are signed up to use our daily electronic reporting system (FACTS) you will be afforded the opportunity to start work 2 hours early. The decision to start early is chosen in the system daily.
- **If I use this flexibility when would my work day end?**
If you choose to start early you would need to stop harvesting 6 hours after sunrise.
- **If I elect to start early, but only start 1 hour before sunrise do I have to end 6 hours after sunrise?**
Yes, if you elect to start early you need to stop harvesting 6 hours after sunrise.
- **Currently, I can harvest 1 hour early on Memorial Day, July 4, Labor Day, and the day immediately preceding each of those holidays. What time would the work day start if I chose to start early on those days?**
If you elect to start early on Memorial Day, July 4, Labor Day, and the day immediately preceding each of those holidays, the work day would begin 3 hours before sunrise and end 6 hours after sunrise on those days.
- **Why is this flexibility only available to crab pot users?**
Both the Blue Crab Industry Advisory Committee and the Tidal Fisheries Advisory Commission felt as though an optional start time would increase user conflict for other gear types, specifically for trotline users who must set their gear daily.
- **Can I use this option in Aberdeen Proving Ground waters?**
No. [Aberdeen Proving Ground regulations](#) reference [COMAR 08.02.03.11](#) to specify the times allowed for crabbing activity in their waters. These regulations do not reference the electronic reporting pilot program and therefore do not include the optional early start time that is part of this program.

For further questions, please call the blue crab hotline at 1-800-893-2722.